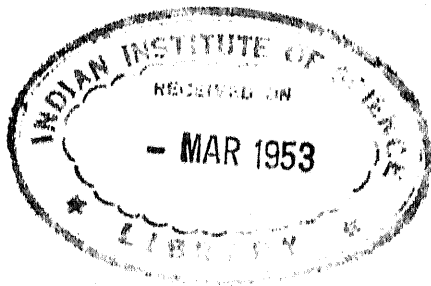


# THREE CONCEPTIONS OF MIND

THEIR BEARING ON THE  
DENATURALIZATION OF THE MIND  
IN HISTORY

BY

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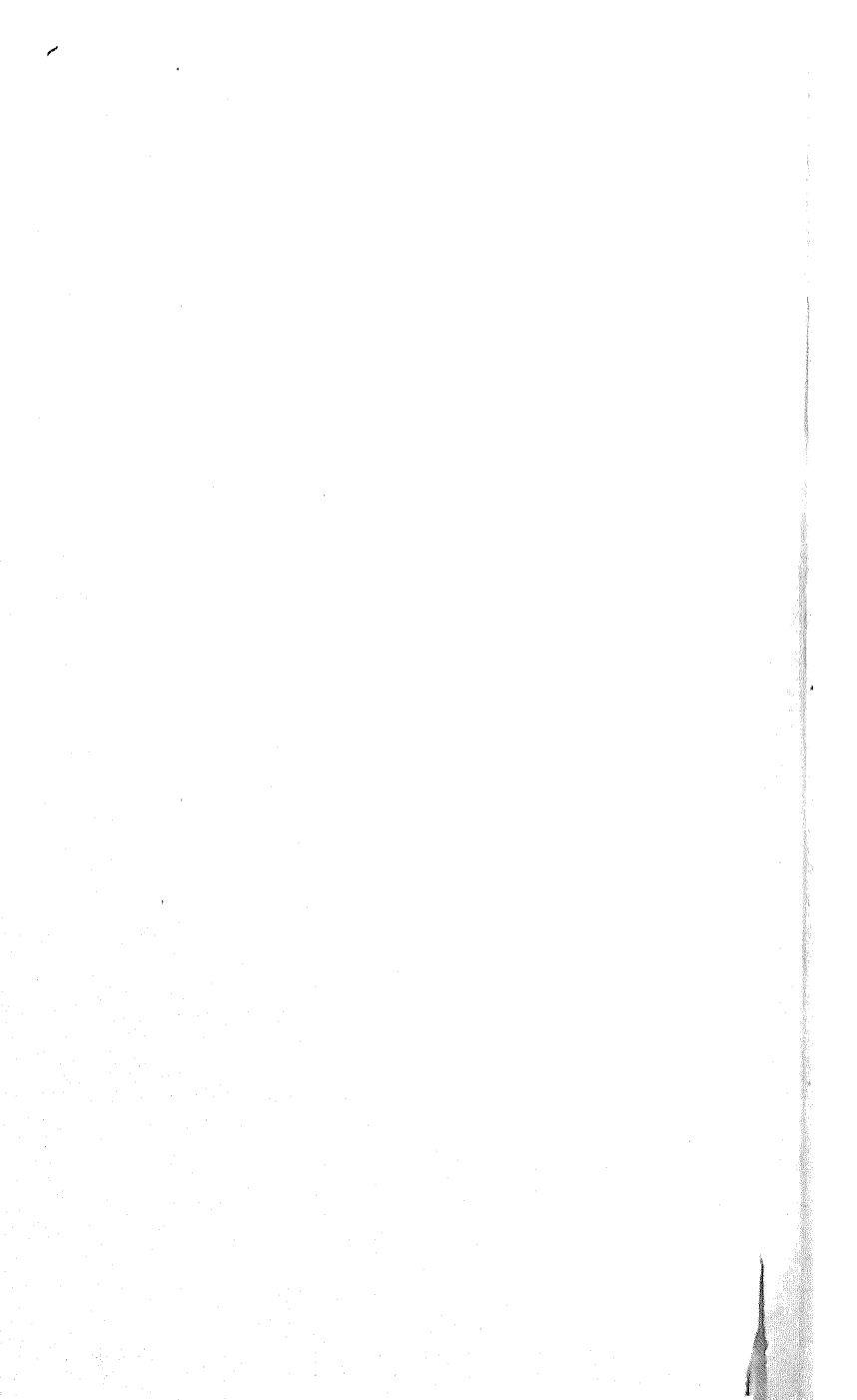
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To  
THE MEMORY OF  
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## FOREWORD

A NEW ATTEMPT at reconstructing the conceptions of mind of Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Descartes certainly calls for an explanation, if not for an apology. The explanation is all the more demanded by the contention partly indicated in the title-page: namely, that the more we advance from Aristotle to Descartes the more we separate ourselves from a naturalistic treatment of the human mind, or the less is the mind regarded in history as a natural phenomenon. But while hoping to bear out this contention, the present essay is of a character as strictly historical as the writer is able to make his exposition of psychological speculations of the past. Its interest lies in historical reconstruction rather than in the historical facts reconstructed. It is a study offered as the probable contribution of one more standpoint from which the history of human insight into mental phenomena may be profitably studied. It seems that this standpoint permits a larger measure of faithfulness to the past of psychological inquiry than the tendency, current among historians of psychology, of describing the history of the science along lines of continuous and progressive development. The prevalence of this tendency has led to certain erroneous views

which we have tried to point out in another place.  
(*Journ. of Philos.* Nov. 20, 1924)

Marking as this little volume does the completion of my academic work at Columbia University, it may not be out of order for me to express here, as the first student that has come from the Argentine Republic to study philosophy in the United States, my grateful acknowledgments for Columbia's magnanimous hospitality. It is hardly necessary to mention the many officers to whom I am indebted. My fundamental indebtedness is to Dean Woodbridge. To his teachings, which transcended the impersonal atmosphere of the class-room, I owe everything worth while in the following pages, and every clear and settled thought in my mind. To Professor Dewey, whose classes attracted me from the other hemisphere, I owe decided attachments to a philosophic attitude which prides itself, as philosophy did during her most glorious days, in an empirical serviceableness to man "qua" man, and in a rational alertness against loaded dice of thought which pass for offsprings of true love of wisdom in many a brand of morals.

For having read the manuscript and the proofs, I wish to express my obligation to Mr. Thomas Kennedy, of the English Department of Columbia University, and to Dr. B. Ginsburg, of the Philosophy Department of the College of the City of New York.

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# Three Conceptions of Mind

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

THERE IS A SENSE in which the history of psychology is a history of many psychologies. In every age the most comprehensive and influential writings on mental phenomena have shown a marked tendency of historical isolation and self-sufficiency. Bent on some novel conviction of his own, or on some particular aspiration of his own age, the earlier psychologist invariably dealt with his subject of inquiry in a manner frankly professed by Descartes in his own renowned case: "as if dealing with a subject no one ever touched upon before." Very different is the prevailing attitude in our own days. In spite of derogatory tendencies shown by historians in connection with the past of psychological speculations, it would seem that the attitude now assumed towards the question as to what the mind is, may be distinguished from former attitudes by a sense of appreciation for the efforts devoted to this onerous problem in historical times. Nor can there be any doubt about the advantage of this manifest insight into history. If we think how the readiness

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to renounce historical inspiration coincided in the past with ineffective attempts at giving the human mind definition, we cannot help feeling confident in the changed criterion that now presides over history.

For exactly the same reason we may also draw Dean Woodbridge's assurance that "the serious study of history is characteristic of a certain maturity of mind." His words, however, comforting as they are to the student of history, need not be less amiable to the self-contained attitude of the ancients than they are to some of the traits of the "intellectually young." To the ancients, as to the intellectually young, the world was apparently "too new and attractive to arouse in them a very absorbing interest in its past." And not always did their historical blindness make them helpless. Often enough it made them precocious, constituting in many a case the influence that inclined them to "care little about what others have done, but much about what they themselves might do." (Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, *The Purpose of History*, p. 1)

From this standpoint, as having been preoccupied with "what they themselves might do," we propose to study in the following pages what Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Descartes have spoken about the human mind. It is perhaps the only standpoint from which their views can be profitably approached. Taken in connection with what others have done

before them, they form a befogged past which many an account of the history of psychological investigations has failed to clear up. But taken in the light of a gallant determination to apply their ingenuity to "what they themselves might do," they can be linked to one another to form, in the Hegelian pocket-words of Santayana, "a unity of a higher kind." Their efforts involve together two thousand years of human insight into mental facts. Each thinker is the highest intellectual exponent of an age; and the age of each marks one of the chief culminations in the history of thought. When placed side by side in the native, if homely, drapery of their respective ages, their very diversity becomes dotted with qualities of a common superiority, and exhibits in engaging rivalry the vigour and the resourcefulness peculiar to each.

In Aristotle's conception of mind the genius of ancient Greece finds one of its enduring claims to philosophic supremacy. His utterances on mental phenomena display in dazzling detail the instruments of thought and the materials of life which worked the miracles of Greek morals and art, and of Greek politics and philosophy. His characterization of the human mind as the perfect realization of a living being reflects the same social background and historical perspective which awakened in his great predecessor the conviction that justice is the perfect realization of a living society. No Greek

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ever found matters for presumption in whatever elements may contribute to a perfect realization. Such elements lay far afield in the secrets of nature and of human well-being. And Aristotle's mind was specially commissioned to pursue and discover them. There is indeed no beginning and no end to the spectacular feast afforded by him when going after natural and social elements with which to fill in the outline of his definition of mind. Armed with the winged thoughts of his ethics and the formidable arms of his metaphysics, he goes to his task in an Olympic manner. At every stride of his untrammelled venture, with every spoil garnered in his quest, the human mind grows before him along lines of a double coextensivity with whatever is natural and human at his reach. It would seem that at the end of his speculative journey the world was left very little to say and a great deal to do about the human mind. His was a program of inquiry according to which the mind was to be known and defined both by surveying in nature the forces which make life possible, and by recruiting in society the factors which make life human. No better point of departure and ultimate goal could be conceived for an interpretation of the human mind in terms relative to scientific scrutiny, and to the growth and application of the knowledge of mind. No matter how future conceptions may be melted and recast in Darwinian moulds, there can hardly ever arise in

science any necessity for improving Aristotle's conviction that if the human body were an eye, sight would be the human mind.

But all those habits of Greek thought and of Greek life which made it possible for Aristotle to anchor the knowledge of man's mind to the knowledge of nature and to the ideals of a dispassionate morals, all those possessions which the Greeks were capable of contributing to a lofty fulfilment of human existence, were replaced in the span of a few centuries by the pathos of a world disenchanted with itself, a world loaded with religious passions which transfigured man into a fallen angel, nature into a valley of grief and tears, and moral ideals into propitiations of blind servitude to dogma and of hopeless misery upon earth. It was truly a world for the then desecrated Greek gods to solace their sore eyes upon. Yet that state of things was to eclipse ancient Greece in the power to teach and guide the subsequent generations. Little as the modern individual could spare his horror at the centuries which superseded the Greek "days of splendour, harmony, and wisdom," yet from no other source has he derived so many of his favorite notions about mental phenomena. No figure in history has had a firmer hold upon his habits of thought as a whole than that of the greatest, and what is of more import, the most typical representative of that pathetic age. Saint Au-

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gustine sums up in his influence on Western thought the universal shadow cast upon the history of the race by the mystic pageant of Medieval life. And his conception of mind sank deeper into the lives of men than any other of his contributions. It is a conception that portrays in specious simplicity the known facts of Saint Augustine's own private life. We see in it the full portrait of his personality, thrown in life colours on the canvas of the philosophic remains of Plato. To his nurture in the unburied vestiges of Plato's thought he joined the rapture of his surrender to the Scriptures in order to see the human mind in the vision of a spiritual bridge to God. Blighted by the vicissitudes of a sinning body in life, and privileged to the overwhelming dignity of a retributory destiny at death, the human mind was to Saint Augustine a double principle of "outwardness" and "innerness" in man, a scrupulous double entry of man's accounts in the world,—with nature, with life, and with "corporeal things," on one side of the ledger, and with God, with truth, and "incorporeal things," on the other. To the historian this view of mind delineates with tragic intensity Saint Augustine's feat of self-apprehension and inward ripening. More than a definition it gives a message to man's mind, a message which, like that of the poet, suggests the positive relief found by Saint Augustine at the end of his own *via crucis*:

“ . . . well for him whose foot hath trod  
The weary road of toil and strife,  
Yet from the sorrows of his life  
Builds ladders to be nearer God.”

But again this Medieval effort, together with its Scholastic associations, was to be overshadowed in all its delightful tenderness with the advent of modern science. Nature now became transformed beyond anything formerly conceived, and became magnified above anything perceived by the senses. All former sources of knowledge fell suddenly into disrepute before a settled perception of the universe by mathematical standards. Every nook and corner of the universe became an object of quantitative determinations, free both from the limitations of sense observation and from the influence of authoritative and traditional pronouncements. The world acquired the features of one immense engine which functioned everywhere with the regularity of automatic precision. Life itself lost with its traditional meaning its moral hue, and yielded also to the force of material and mechanical standards. But mental facts, in spite of their newborn status in knowledge, remained for a time immune to all change. It was natural for views on mind that had been associated for over a thousand years with religious traditions to resist rising to a level above these traditions. A strange situation followed in which psychological views of the past turned mean-

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ingless in science, while they sustained their past significance in unquestioned religious beliefs. It became accordingly necessary to revise their meaning to suit both the growing emancipation in science and the extant acquiescence in religion. And this revision was consciously undertaken by Descartes. He found a positive relief for scientific and religious preoccupations in an interpretation of mind effected in the light of a conception of truth never known before. This conception of truth rendered all bodily channels for human contact with nature, with established opinion, and external imposition altogether unnecessary, doing away with the mental status with which these channels had been formerly endowed. The human body, in other words, became irrelevant in matters of truth, while the mind was explained by various analogies, religious and metaphysical, as an instrument of truth. The mind, conceived in this manner as if in consecrated tribute to the truths of the modern individual, lost not only all coextensivity with the human body or with the natural world, but also all extension. It became a new substance with an inherent category of its own: thought. This category gave the mind an inviolate solitude which spelled immunity from error and falsity, and was thus set up alone as the sole source and sanction of truth. Descartes thus found a background for logic in the disembodiment of the mind.

It is noticeable, accordingly, that these three his-



torical efforts diverged successively along particular lines. Their historical isolation from one another indicates not only that each has made a radically new beginning of the same quest, but also that there has been a departure more and more receding from the position taken by the first of them. There is hardly any ground or need, however, for giving metaphysical scope to these divergences or to the growing separation of the Augustinian and Cartesian conceptions from that of Aristotle. For each effort is the best in its own local outlook, and none of them presents any point of direct applicability in the situations from which the others have sprung. Live and articulate forces which suggested and corroborated the conclusions of one thinker had no life nor meaning for the others. Each effort succeeded in enucleating the whole historical situation which generated it, and its success remained concealed in the secularity of a passing hour, while other efforts were to follow it without its assistance and without its sanction. Each thinker, in a word, addressed himself to an age which offered its own plausibilities of truth, and called for its own separate enlightenment.

Nor is it necessary to avoid here the historian's temptation of arranging his data in a chronological order. In fact, in giving this order to our three conceptions of mind, in transporting them with their respective native settings to the chronological order

of their appearances in history, we shall have to make an observation — by which we set the value of this essay — regarding the historian's customary assumption that earliness in history means primitiveness in thought. Quite the other way points the assumption that suggests itself in connection with these three historical conceptions of mind, unless, of course, naturalism should be regarded as primitive. For the naturalism found in Aristotle is half lost in Saint Augustine, to whom the mind is in active commerce with a supernatural world, and is totally lost in Descartes, to whom the natural world sustains the meaning of what mind is not.

## CHAPTER II

### NATURE'S CULMINATION IN MAN

**B**EFORE THE ADVENT of professed philosophical caviling on the secrets of the human mind, the ancient Greeks were able to master and understand the most remarkable array of moral and intellectual forces ever displayed by the human mind. This self-mastery, this unstudied competence to understand themselves, came from their spontaneous discernment of the consanguinity of human life with the outspread life of the cosmos. Wrung from every gift and pride of their lives, it was a salutary discernment which no whisper or cankering pang ever chilled in their scruples of feeling. Its invoked ministrations inwove their minds into the texture of the natural world with the same exquisite affinities which united wise Athens to Goddess Athene. Yielding on faith to its full impact upon their fortunes in life, they intrenched their moral outlook and intellectual fertility in the unchastened greatness of cosmic existence. Truly, this untutored conformity with nature did for ancient Greece what no hoarded formula or clinching argument of its philosophers did for the many lands and many ages that sat at the feet of its past.

It was precisely this spontaneous and unwavering sense of kinship with the works of nature that Aristotle honoured with impartial serenity and expressed with intense distinctness by describing the human mind as the happy fulfilment of a parcel of nature. In thus defining the human mind, he was penning a fitting epitome to Greek life, a graphic epilogue to the living show of ancient Greece. Sensitive to the passing scenes of the show, he pressed his inquiries concerning the human mind under the entrancing glow of a Greek mind self-aware. Nothing was needed for his intellectual sincerity and his lordly precision of thought to turn his truthfulness to that life, which he actually witnessed and loved and hoped for, into a true spokesmanship for the human mind. By bearing forever witness to what the Greek mind really was, his tight definition of the human mind was to turn inevitably into nothing less than an objective representation of a truly civilized mind; into nothing short of what a truly civilized mind will ever be able to say about itself.

It is evidence of the infelicity with which actual life is reëchoed in philosophy, that Aristotle's definition of mind, so congenial to the native lore of the Greeks, should have been an unprecedented feat in Greek philosophy. The domestic Greek faith in the union of nature and mind, by the time it was carried over by Aristotle to a philosophic universe of discourse, had been largely robbed of its direct appli-

cability by philosophers who tried to give it literal conformity with their favourite notions concerning nature, concerning one party to the union. Even Plato, who made a laborious effort to recover the episodic wisdom of that faith, succeeded in his lofty undertaking only at the expense of obscuring the concept of mind with the dusts of myth and mystery raised by the wing of his literary license. In other cases, the situation was still worse. Becoming subservient and incidental to the knowledge of nature, the knowledge of mind was specially checked in pre-Aristotelian thought by an unrestricted interchangeability of attributes between physical and psychological facts, a crude sort of barter which begins with the belief of Thales that the magnet has a soul, and terminates with the conviction of Democritus that the human mind is a dance of invisible atoms.

It was natural for Aristotle, after surveying these chaotic antecedents, to decide that it was necessary "to avoid their errors" by going at his psychological inquiry "all afresh." His radical decision, however, meant no break or estrangement from Greek thought. On the contrary, his attitude towards earlier Greek thinkers suspended his entire undertaking on an iron string of consistency with what will always serve to distinguish Greek thought from almost all subsequent thinking: with those habits and that discipline of mind with which the

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Greeks forced the cosmos to embosom the lives of men and to respond to the challenges of a human logic. In fact, in turning against his predecessors, particularly against Plato and Democritus, Aristotle enabled Greek philosophy to find its way in the realm of mental facts, as it had been enabled to do by Plato in the realm of social relations, and by Democritus in that of physical phenomena. By freeing the human mind from the burden of Plato's heavenly equipage and from the cumbrous moorings to which Democritus had fastened it, Aristotle was able to place it on that plane of frank and free observation on which these great predecessors of his had succeeded in placing their predilect objects of speculation.

Further than raising the human mind above the level of a wayward idealism and above the strictures of a punctiform materialism Aristotle had little to do in order to launch a science of mind in the world. But beside indicating for psychological investigation a permanent setting he formulated for it a program of growing attainment. The program became filled in bold outline with the results of his own inquiries, and these results gave to his writings as a whole their dual existence in historical times, one of passionate controversy, when not of utter concealment, and another of unrivaled supremacy, when not of reverential consecration. Even at the present time it is not altogether an easy task to draw among his

utterances an absolute line of demarcation between what gave them supreme historical influence, and what will always give them a rational appeal and a practical value for people interested in mental facts. In our own days, indeed, when any former period seems to turn pale and remote before our vaunted insight into mental phenomena, Professor Dewey finds it appropriate to look upon many psychological conclusions of Aristotle as "permanent truths." (John Dewey, *Democ. and Educ.* 299f.)

To consider what is most fundamental and representative in Aristotle's conclusions regarding the human mind is to transport ourselves in thought to the center of the stage in which he obtained the materials for his *De Anima* and his *Ethica*. We soon step unavoidably into the rarefied atmosphere of his physics, the subject matter of which comprehends the human mind as an object of detailed analysis. But when due concession is made to his obsolete language, his categorical physics unveils before us five distinct faces of a total view of mind. Each face points to a coextensivity of the human mind along a particular direction: one, with the world as a whole; a second, with the objects of the mind's operations; a third, with these operations in relation to each other; a fourth, with the human body; and a fifth, with human behaviour or with a social environment. After acquainting ourselves with each one of these five aspects of the human mind, we may

superpose them upon one another and behold in the sequel a totality of the mind in the double light of its physical basis and of its ethical significance.

Turn, to begin with, to the world in which Aristotle moved, to that which he defined in his physics, and we have before us a world in which every object in existence, every object in nature and in science, is conceived as "matter" and "form." To each of these divisions corresponds a logical category which obtains, for its part, an existential status in metaphysics. To matter, belongs the category of "potentiality"; to form, that of "actuality." An actuality has much of the character given to the monad by Leibnitz. It is the status given to an object when the object in question is conceived as including to a large measure the universal web of all existence. A potentiality, on the other hand, has all the meaning ascribed to a unit of time by Zeno. It applies when an object is taken with the imaginative possibility of excluding the rest of the universe from the elements that contribute to its meaning and composition. Now, in this categorical world of matter and potentiality and of form and actuality, the first thing to be asked about the human mind, as about any object of scientific observation, is, which category belongs to it in nature or in science. Such is, in fact, the first problem that Aristotle proposes to solve in the *De Anima*. The importance of the problem cannot be overestimated.



It spreads over the whole field of Aristotle's psychological inquiries.

True, the problem is put in a purely polemical fashion. It is in a sense a dialectical trump-card played by Aristotle on earlier Greek philosophers and their own world of matter and form. Thus after using their language in order to ask whether the mind is matter or form, he avails himself freely of the meaning given in his metaphysics to the categories of actuality and potentiality, in order to spring the reply that it is neither matter nor form, and that it must be both because there is no matter without form, and no form without matter. Yet, precisely in this recourse of Aristotle to the most pervasive principle of his metaphysics, it is not difficult to perceive another sense to his artful question. By simply thrusting forward that principle his question enables him to convert his physics into the cornerstone of his psychological inquiry. The question as to whether the mind is matter or form is therefore a sort of artifice with which he drags out the mind from the idealistic and materialistic regions it formerly haunted, and transfers it to a domain of things ruled by the imperative thought that there is in this world nothing material which is not also ideal, and nothing ideal which is not also material.

Solely by stating the question Aristotle turned it into an efficacious element of dispute. For without waiting for a reply he had used it to render the tra-

ditional world of matter and form wholly impotent for dealing with the human mind. At the same time, he offered in his categories of potentiality and actuality a true relief from that impotency. The comprehensive sway of these categories over matter and form not only met the ethical and scientific necessities which brought the concepts of matter and form into existence in Greek philosophy, but they also obviated the difficulties which were keenly felt, but which were left unsolved, by Plato and Democritus. The world of matter and form, seen through the Aristotelian categories of potentiality and actuality, presented an aspect altogether new in the light of which the human mind did not face the alternative of being either separated from or identified with the material constituents of the world; for in the new interpretation of matter and form the human mind became matter without ceasing to be form, and became form without ceasing to be matter. Its newly acquired locus gave it a meaning and an existence in the order and proportion of a coextension with the world.

This brings us to the first of the five aspects of Aristotle's conception of mind. That the mind is coextensive with the world follows from every feature of the transformation wrought in metaphysics by his categories of potentiality and actuality. The net result of this transformation was, as we saw, the conviction that every object in the world, the human

mind included, is matter *and* form, not either matter or form. The categories of potentiality and actuality really succeeded in driving out matter from an independent cubicle of existence. Being driven by them into form, matter lost also in nature the status already denied to it by Plato in science. In this manner, all roads leading to the mind's isolation from the world, in a materialistic interpretation, became effectively blocked. It was something not difficult for Aristotle to accomplish. To make the issue of materialism impossible in psychological inquiry, he had at hand the legacy of Plato's thought. What Plato had based on moral exigencies of life, Aristotle could now establish on the basis of a deep insight into the natural configuration of existence.

But with the same insight Aristotle was to block the avenues left open by idealistic interpretations to the mind's isolation from the world. Here the larger and more elaborate problem of the exact meaning and proportion of the mind's coextensivity with the world comes to the foreground in Aristotle as another result of his overhauled world of matter and form. In the light of the categories of potentiality and actuality, every object in the world, in becoming matter and form, being and non-being, needs no longer to transcend nature in order to find a counterpart for its reality and for its knowledge. It finds now this counterpart in nature itself. Things themselves become fractional views of nature, while

nature in its totality becomes a logical criterion of permanent reference for truth and for true existence. In this logical function, nature acquires a rational and existential superiority over any of its parts, all of which turn the order of nature into a gradation or hierarchical scale of existences and truths; and in this hierarchy every object takes a dual position in reference to its origin and goal in nature, one as actuality to things lower, and another as potentiality to things higher, than itself. Twining themselves round one another in one universal web, actualities and potentialities form in this manner a double series of objects and truths, gathering up in one object of objects, one truth of truths, an actuality of all actualities. And this actuality, which is nature in its totality, is the only pure actuality in the hierarchy. Any other actuality owes its existence and meaning—is causally related—to the many actualities which separate it from the pure actuality. The seed, for instance, is a seed because of the expected plant; for without the plant it would cease to be a seed. It is a seed, moreover, because of what makes the plant be a plant. When all things that make a seed a seed are truly considered, their setting swells into the unlimited significance of a world which skirts the soil of its actuality, the plant, and gives the plant a footing in the infinite totality of nature. Isolated in thought, however, the seed is individualized as a constituent of a world in which we

take for granted its existence. The seed, so marked off, acquires the status of potentiality in relation to the actualities which, like the plant, give it ultimate intelligibility and tangibility; it also acquires the status of actuality in relation to potentialities which, like the chemical elements in its make-up, or like the soil and the air, are already involved within its career in the world. And the same thing applies to the human mind.

The human mind may also be said to be both potentiality and actuality. As potentiality it has no causal power to produce anything in the world. It is enveloped within the totality of things taken without thought or scrutiny, and has no status as an object, much less as a subject, carved out in nature for scientific treatment. It is as an actuality that it comes to have such a status. As an actuality, the human mind draws its meaning from its relationships and expected manifestations in the world. It becomes individualized by its identification with these relationships and manifestations which place it above the minds of lower animals and below the rationality of nature as a whole. It becomes, in other words, an actuality among actualities, all of which are involved in the actuality of actualities, a subject and an object all in one, or the thought of thoughts, Aristotle's metaphysical God. Only this god presents the double feat, ascribed to the human mind by subsequent philosophers, of a knower and

a known thing. "Just as the human mind, which has for its object composite things, is related to its object in favourite moments, the object being different from itself, just so the divine reason, is itself related to itself through all eternity." (*Met.*, II. 9.)

It is to this artificer of Aristotle's metaphysics, to this all comprehensive mentality of nature, that the human mind takes proportionate rank in its order and measure of coextension with the world. Viewed from its individual position in the hierarchy of universal existence, the human mind ranks below the thing of things, the thought of thoughts, and below also other higher actualities such as the harmonious and perpetual equilibrium of the heavenly bodies; while it ranks above the minds of other organic beings, as well as above other actualities as those of inorganic bodies. In relation to higher actualities, it is comprehended within their meaning and existence; it has no independent status. In relation to lower actualities, on the other hand, it not only comprehends them, but also shares to a higher degree than they in the rationality of nature as a whole. The human mind, in fine, is a sort of cross-sectional view taken somewhere near the upper parts of the entire gradation of universal phenomena. While it is a potentiality, because it is one more object within the totality of nature, it is also an actuality because it is a culmination, a goal, an outcome of whatever objects are involved in any cross-

section made in the hierarchy of existence at any plane lower than its own.

For science, dealing as it does, not with nature in its entirety (which is an object of knowledge for the pure actuality only) but with nature piecemeal, with individual objects in nature, the human mind is an unapproachable object of knowledge when not taken as an actuality, or as comprehending actualities which are dependent on it for their own culmination or realization in the world. Here we have, in this culmination of things in the mind, the second face of Aristotle's representation of the human mind.

Indeed, as the mind is a potentiality to nature, so the mind's operations are potentialities to the objects of the mind's operations. We cannot speak of mental activities as transformations going on in the mind, "just as we cannot speak of the builder being transformed when he is building a house." (*De An.*, II. 5.) Mental activities are a large number of potentialities, not because they cause or produce, but because they *are*, a large variety of changes occurring in the fulfilment of things in the world. They are just the different degrees of actualization which things in nature go through in order to unfold their essential natures. And it is part of their essential nature to be objects of mental operations. Moreover, mental activities are potentially to their objects what these objects are actually to mental activities. For instance, "that which is capable of

sense perception is potentially what the sensible thing is actually." (*De An.*, II. 5.)

To Aristotle, in other words, the fact that there are in the world such things as objects of sense perception is not due wholly to the fact that there are in the world such things as the senses. It is also due to the fact that there are things with the rational significance and phenomenal status of sense perception. Owing to the very nature of the world in which we live there are objects of sense perception and also senses. There is also a reciprocity between the object of sense perception and the operation of sensing it, a reciprocity which makes it possible for both to realize their respective essential natures. Thus, on being seen, things fulfil their actuality of being visible things; on being heard, they realize their actuality of being sonorous things. So also with the operations themselves of seeing and hearing. "The actualization of the object of sense, and that of the sense itself, is one and the same process . . . ; though not actually identical in their essential natures, yet when that which has the potentiality of hearing, and that which has the potentiality of sounding, actually hear and actually emit sound, at that moment, the realized hearing and the realized sounding are simultaneously complete." (*Ib.*, III. 2.)

What makes the sound and the hearing one single process is the fact that, prior to and beyond both the sound and the hearing, the complete actuality



of the process is an integral part of the rationality of nature as well as a part of the systematization of human knowledge. This rational and cognitive counterpart to the process has the causal power and the very reality of both sounding and hearing. Hearing and sounding, when looked at in an imaginative effort as two things, will present their inseparability to one another, their fusion both to the conceptual formula of hearing in science, and to the actual hearing of a sound in nature, as the two inseparable faces of a single coin. Neither the sound nor the hearing can be taken as the reality of the process. This reality, either in nature or in knowledge, lies in the experience itself of hearing, or else in the antecedent symbolic representation of a goal reached simultaneously by both the sound and the hearing.

One other illustration, and we are done with the co-extensivity of mental operations in regard to their objects. We choose that of the coextensivity of thought with the objects of thought. Thought is related to action as sense perception is related to things. Apart from action, thought is as incomplete and unreal as sensing would be without the thing sensed. "When the mind in its own world says that a thing is pleasant or painful, here in the world of things it pursues or avoids, — in a word, it acts." (*Ib.*, III. 2.) The difference between sense perception and thought consists in the fact that in sense perception things realize one of their rudimentary actualities,

while in thought they realize the highest actualities they can reach through the coöperation of the human mind. But the coexistence of thought and the object of thought is just as secure and obvious as that between sense and the object sensed. Thus, "thought is potentially the object of thought, though not actually till thought takes place." (*Ib.*, III. 5.) On the other hand, in thought the human mind itself realizes its highest actuality in the world, while in sense perception it unfolds one of its lower actualities. Thought gives the human mind full title to its fulfilment, to its complete reality. The mind, "prior to the exercise of thought, is no reality at all." (*Ib.*, III. 6.) In thought the mind *is* the thing thought. "The mind is the thing when actually thinking it." (*Ib.*, III. 7.)

The third face of Aristotle's conception, that of the coextensivity of the mind's operations with one another, follows necessarily from the fact that they *are* the changes or different degrees of actualization of both the objects with which they are conversant, and of the mind in its entirety. Taken side by side, mental activities form, therefore, a graded series of their own of which we may say this: when seen in its totality it constitutes the human mind, when seen from the standpoint of its upper sections it constitutes thought, and when observed from the standpoint of its lower sections it constitutes sense perception. It is a small hierarchy given by the

ordering of things in nature from the standpoint of the mental operations involved in the actualizations of things. It is the mental side of the process by which things culminate in nature as objects of mental activities. For instance, on the first or lowest of their actualizations, things are things seen, heard, touched, sensed. In this actualization things form the first or the sensation stage of the hierarchy of mental operations. Then, on higher actualizations things are imagined, remembered, recalled, recognized. On this stage of actualization things form the imagination and memory stage of the mind's series of activities. Finally, on the highest actualization that they are capable of, things are objects of knowledge or of thought, and here we have the upper grade of mental operations. Now when looked at in retrospect, all these different stages or operations of mind are either the human mind itself, or the series of things already involved within the elements of a fraction of the rational and existential order and truth of nature. So that to speak of the coextensivity of the mind's operations is to speak either of the coextensivity of the mind with itself, or of that of the things included or comprehended by mind in its status as an actuality.

And one of the things thus comprehended by the mind as an actuality is the human body. By studying how the mind presupposes the body we shall observe the fourth and perhaps the most interesting

aspect of Aristotle's attitude towards mental phenomena. What gives this aspect its importance in history, is the manner in which it is set up over against prevailing notions and doctrines which were fated to have more influence than those of Aristotle on the psychological insight of subsequent generations.

The point at issue here is the Aristotelian definition of mind as "the perfect realization of an organic body." The terms of the definition are elaborated by Aristotle on the statement that one "is to take the expression of perfect realization in the following two senses: as an implicit state corresponding to knowledge as possessed; and as an outwardly exercised process corresponding to an object of actual observation." The discussion that follows this assertion is illuminating though apparently puzzling. Thus, that Aristotle should take up at all a body and mind question is no little mystifying. For it needs no extensive reading of his metaphysics in order to acquire the habit of repeating to oneself that the mind is the actuality of the body, and feel thenceforth that any question concerning the relations of mind and body is taken care of by the concept of actuality. This concept seems to make the question irrelevant. The concept neither requires any elaborate exposition of its application to the human mind, nor calls for any defense of the union it establishes between the mind and the body. Yet,

not only does Aristotle take up the question of the union of body and mind; he also complicates matters, as we can see, by putting in the place of actuality a new category, that of "perfect realization."

This apparently gratuitous and complicated discussion is easily justified, however, by the historical precedents against which the whole movement of the *De Anima* is directed. There is in this discussion a severity of stress against the uncertainty and vagueness of former psychological doctrines, to which Aristotle devotes the bulk of one of the three books of his treatise, an uncertainty highly damaging to the views held by his predecessors on natural phenomena, and a vagueness which he sees not in the least relieved by them in their coinage of the name of "mind" through a derivation of  $\psiυχ\epsilon$  from  $\psiυχ\epsilon\iota\nu$  (*Ib.*, II. 1.) In his interest to attend to those precedents Aristotle seems to have adopted a circuitous route for defining the human mind. Nothing is more necessary to see in his *De Anima*. After availing himself of the new category of "perfect realization" in order to define the human mind as the perfect realization of an organic body, or of a natural phenomenon from which some of his predecessors had abstracted it, he returns to his metaphysical category of actuality in order to contend that a perfect realization is nothing but an actuality. All the arguments in this connection lead to no other

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contention. In following them closely we may note that not even by a rhetorical accident does a body and mind question present any difficulty to Aristotle. Thus, by defining the human mind, he says, as the perfect realization of an organic body, "it should be plain that we must no more ask whether the mind and the body are one, than ask whether the wax and the figure impressed upon it are one, or ask generally whether the material and that of which it is the material are one; for although unity and being are used in a variety of senses, their most distinctive sense is that of perfect realization." (*Ib.*, II. 1.) So, for instance, if an instrument such as an ax were an organic body, "its axhood would be its perfect realization, its actuality, and thus, so to speak, its mind." (*Ib.*, II. 1.) In other words, perfect realization, actuality, and mind, are the same thing when applied to an organic body. So, too, "if the eye were possessed of life, vision would be its mind, because vision is the actuality that expresses the idea of the eye." (*Ib.*, II. 1.) In other words, it is in the sense in which vision is not only the function of the eye, but also all the underlying and composing features which make an eye be an eye, that the human mind is the actuality or perfect realization of the human body. "Just as the eye is both the pupil and the vision, so also the organic body is both the mind and the body in combination." (*Ib. Ib.*)

In turning now to the last of the five aspects from which we are able to study Aristotle's view of mind, to the aspect of the mind's coextensivity with human behavior and society, we may say that if in the *De Anima* Aristotle has proved that the human mind is the realization and equivalence of life, in the *Ethica* he proves that the human mind, to be truly human, is the realization and equivalence of a particular kind of life. Here the conviction that the human mind is a fulfilment of natural processes, becomes immensely strengthened by an insistence on the moral and political conditions which contribute to make that fulfilment essentially human. So that the view that the human mind is nature's culmination in man becomes insensibly supplemented by the view that it is also man's culmination in nature; and the conception as to what the human mind really is, comes to the support of what Aristotle believes the human mind should be. There is nothing exoteric about this matter. Just as nature as a whole realizes its highest actuality in the metaphysical deity, by an awareness of all the elements which give it wholeness and superiority over any of its parts, so also the human mind realizes its highest actuality in the virtuous man, by means of the mind's awareness of its possibilities of superiority over all the elements which go to form it, elements which the world offers to human strivings after perfection.

This fifth and last aspect of Aristotle's conception

is related in a significant manner to the other four. The mind appears in it in its growth within society as it appeared in the other four faces in its growth within nature. In both of these directions, Aristotle would say, "only some of our mental activities are attributed to us in so far as we are men, and not in so far as we are animals." (*Eth.*, III. 1108b.) We see in his *Ethica*, in other words, as we saw in his *De Anima*, that while the human mind shares most of its functions with the minds of other living beings, "the strictly human function is thought." (*Ib.*) This is the function that enhances man's life with the elements of choice and effort, and places it thereby on a double status of intellectual attainment and happiness. It makes man's mind dependent as much on man as on nature. Hence Aristotle's educational doctrine that "moral and intellectual possessions come to us neither by nature nor in spite of nature, but we are supplied by nature with instruments to acquire them, and through our own effort we can perfect them." (*Ib.*, II. 1103b.)

More than a growth, it is a completion of mind in society that we have before us in this last face of the Aristotelian view. Only human effort, human choice, "the striving after virtue," can bring about a "complete life." Aristotle says in true Socratic fashion that, "neither horse nor ox nor any brute animal can ever be said to be happy, for none of them feel any striving after virtue; for the



same reason not even children can be said to have the privilege of ever being happy; . . . for happiness requires complete virtue and a complete life." (*Eth.*, I. 1100b.) But it also requires both a better society than that in which men have ever lived, and a more serious disposition to strive after virtue than men have usually shown. Hence Aristotle's efforts to map out his historically hedged about chart of attainable virtues and avoidable vices, and hence also his preoccupation with educational and political theories which center around his vision of a well-planned human existence along lines of toil and manly improvement in the endeavour of conquering a level of life above the irrational and near the divine. In the light of those efforts and of that preoccupation, it is obvious that for Aristotle, neither the precepts of those in authority, nor the example of the wise, nor the irresistible forces of nature, nor even the inherencies of the mind itself, can be capable of bringing about the complete fulfilment of human life, or the perfect realization of men, unless an adequate social medium is provided in which men become virtuous by the practice and the habit of virtue, and become wise by the exaltation of the possession of wisdom above all other possessions among men. Yet that social medium is in itself an element or inherency of mind. True, the completion of the mind's fulfilment is impossible until the individual has set sail within a political organi-

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zation established by such legislation "as may be called the performances or tangible results of Political Science." (*Ib.*, X. 1182b.) But that ordering of political life is an actuality of the mind, and one of those high actualities which cause the mind's unfolding along a certain direction. It is one of those natural elements which, even prior to their perfect attainment or realization, make men a political animal. On the other hand, when once realized or attained, it constitutes one of the essential potentialities of the human mind, as any of those natural elements which make man an organic body. So that the prerequired social medium which is to condition the happy completion of the human mind is a true factor of mind. It is involved within the elements circumscribed by the mind's locus. It is, actually, nothing but mind.

To Aristotle, in fine, the human mind means an outcome of activities in nature and of man. It is, to use Aristotle's vocabulary again, human life actually. There is no *subjectiveness* about it. None of the innerly hidden and ghostly things that were taken for mental facts by subsequent philosophizing applies to the Aristotelian view of mind.

In comparing this view with those which we study in the following chapters we shall have occasion to observe some of the meanings of mind to which Aristotle's writings are immune. It should suffice here to say that as an object of scientific inquiry the

mind is, to Aristotle, of the nature of any other object in the world. All constituents that form the mind are open to observation in things or in human behavior. Moreover, for the observer, its totality is involved within the elements of a notional formula. In nature it is a thing among other natural things. In science it is a formula among other scientific formulas. Like the formula  $H_2O$ , "the perfect realization of an organic body" is a definition which, to the scientist, to the psychologist, or to the metaphysician, "is the object itself." (*Met.*, 1075b.) And in Aristotle's hands this definition has all the plasticity of any true scientific formula. That is how in his *Posterior Analytics* the mind is a verbal symbol; in his *Metaphysica* and *Physica*, it is an actuality; in his biological treatises, it is life; in his *De Anima*, it is human life; and in his *Politica* and *Ethica*, it is a choice-worthy life.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHRISTIAN SOUL

S AINT AUGUSTINE'S conception of mind is written large over the history of his life. Its antecedents are the stages by which he became gradually transformed from an overconscious African reprobate into the expiating Christian saint. Into the theoretic formulation of this conception he poured the substance of rich philosophic traditions, the pungent passions of more than one religion, and the exultations of a rare moral character. Drawing their materials from these resources, his psychological reflections were exalted by his sacerdotal unction above the local needs which they piously voiced, and became embodied within the enforced dogma of a great religion to furnish the crux of moral union between his own age and every subsequent age in history. Herein lies perhaps the secret of his powerful hold over future psychological efforts. Having had a positive efficacy in leading him to the Christian faith, his psychological insight showed features technically applicable to the myriads of mind which have preserved, down to the present day, under the canopy of the Christian Church, a primeval vinculus with Medieval habits of thought.

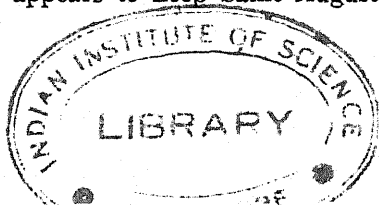
It was apparently in this manner that the psychological views of Saint Augustine acquired in the history of philosophy a prominence that runs parallel to their practical value in theology. A French prelate once said of Maine de Biran that, had he studied in his youth the writings of Saint Augustine, he would have spared himself fifty years of speculation on the human mind. Without entering into spheres of historical comparison, it would be safe to make the same observation regarding many a psychologist of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who somehow remained immune to the influence of Descartes and Locke. Of course, such an observation has its dangers when made to give a modern tone to Saint Augustine. Thus, one would have to take lightly in history the work of Descartes and Locke, and perhaps accept in psychology some of the alloyed currency of Medieval times, in order to press Windelband's claim that Saint Augustine "is one of the founders of modern thought," and in some respects "rises far above Aristotle." This generous estimate by the eminent German historian needs not be wrangled about. It is well deserved by the historical prominence enjoyed by Saint Augustine for one thousand years and more. But it suggests a few things which are pertinent to the general topic of these pages, and are therefore worth mentioning.

What should particularly not be left unsaid is

that such a reference to Aristotle and to the foundations of modern thought, is, to say the least, misleading. Nothing in Saint Augustine can indicate a growth either from Aristotle or towards the moderns. In the first place, Saint Augustine did not come to improve on Aristotle's *De Anima* and *Ethica*. They were unknown to him. Nor could he have come to pick up in some other manner the thread of Aristotelian thought, for at his time it was already lost. It was irrevocably lost in the intellectual aridity of the intervening centuries, in which uprooted traditions of several civilizations tutored man's fancy to see in the world the fallen walls of an hyperphysical creation, and to look upon human life as man's pilgrimage through a universal pandemonium in which all possible truths were so many verbal shams, and all attainable goods so many hideous snares. No one was more imbued than Saint Augustine with this supernaturalism with which Christianity came to settle itself in the hearts of men. No one, therefore, could have been in philosophy at a greater length from Aristotle. This separation of the two thinkers is proof of a common greatness in them. For the spokesmanship with which Saint Augustine voiced the modicum of intelligence and surreptitious happiness that subsisted in his age, was the same one which Aristotle had shown for the scientific bent of mind and the outspoken joy in life of the ancient Greeks.

In the next place, Saint Augustine's hold over many a modern thinker points much more to the precarious resourcefulness of the latter than to any services rendered by Saint Augustine in laying the foundations of modern thought. It is not difficult to locate the real secret of that influence. It was not due, to be sure, to the philosophic weight of Saint Augustine's writings, with which writers of import seem to have been no more familiar than Maine de Biran. It is much more plausible to suppose, as already suggested, that it was due to the blandishments of the religious tradition within which Saint Augustine's thought became imbedded. For instance, if Descartes and Locke, who should offer a genuine illustration, are at one almost verbally with Saint Augustine when they argue for the incorporeality of the mind, they are far from offering a case in which the Medieval thinker has furnished the proper basis or the proper food for modern speculations. On the contrary, they present an instance of two founders of modern thought, trying to renovate the whole woof of philosophic insight into psychological phenomena, without disturbing one thread of a religious dogma totally peopled with Saint Augustine's psychological formulas. (Cp. St. Augustine, *Trin.*, X. vii.; Descartes. *Disc.*, IV; Locke, *Essay*, XX. iii. 22.)

If we look closer, moreover, it should be evident that what appears to keep Saint Augustine at one



with some modern thinkers, is what really keeps him apart from them. In modern philosophers, his psychological formulas can be easily seen to linger as trappings of ancestral beliefs, whereas in his own case they were the result of an exact representation of his personal experiences in life. Had he also merely rehearsed in his psychological views the psalmodies of a fabulous tradition, we are sure that his position in the history of psychology would not have been of more importance than that of any other saint in the calendar. Beneath his supernaturalism and fanatical zeal, which swelled his native perspective and historical influence, what gave his psychological insight appropriate materials and a decisive test, was his effort to turn his religious fervour from an unaccountable influence in life into a rational course of action. It was an effort in self-scrutiny and moral transparency which was to save his own mind from being burned to a cinder by the religious fires harassing his age. And it was just in the degree in which he obtained this personal salvation that he was able, at a time when "mind" was nothing but a Scriptural metaphor or a Greek myth, to erect one of the few landmarks in the history of psychology.

Another element in Saint Augustine's mind, next in importance to that of his personal perplexities in the world, and closely allied with his orthodox supernaturalism, was his Platonic nurture. It was Pla-



tonic thought that lent philosophic dignity to everything he wrote, and actually enabled him to work himself out of his most serious moral difficulties, even of those difficulties which, up till his thirties, blocked his way to becoming a Christian. It is of interest to quote Saint Augustine's own words in candid confession of the manner in which the tradition of the Greek philosopher was his inspiration and guide in the supreme crisis of his conversion to Christianity:

"Having then read those books of the Platonists, and being admonished by them to search after incorporeal truths, I saw Thy invisible things. . . . Upon these writings, I believe therefore, it was Thy pleasure that I should fall before I studied Thy Scriptures, for hadst Thou in the familiarity of (the Scriptures) grown sweet unto me, and had I afterwards fallen upon those books, they might have withdrawn me from the solid ground of piety." (*Conf.*, VII. xx.)

This avowed nurture in Platonism supplied Saint Augustine's psychological views with their graphic setting, just as his personal experiences stamped them with empirical character, and his theological preoccupations gave them historical influence. Within that setting, psychological facts were to him essentially metaphysical, not subjectivistic, in their nature. From this point of view, mental phenomena were to be understood by reference to the things with which the mind is conversant, not by reference to

elements taken as the mind's structural constituents. The mind, moreover, was to be naturalized within a kingdom of vile matter and noble forms, from which it would draw meaning for all the facts which make up its career or existence in the world. So, for instance, when Plato himself speaks of three divisions of the mind, one vegetative, one sensual, and another rational, he is to be understood, not as harbouring the pretension of unveiling a psychical economy in man, part plant, part animal, and part human, but as referring to things in the world which, in their relation to mental activities, determine three orders of organic life. In the same manner, when Saint Augustine adopts, among other descriptions of the human mind, the formula of *vita seminalis*, *vita sensualis*, and *vita rationalis*, he largely identifies the human mind with things capable of conditioning for it a status either human, or animal, or plant-like. (*De Civ. Dei*, V. ix.; *De Quant. An.*, 33.)

There were accordingly three factors in Saint Augustine's thought. He depended for subject matter on actual experience, for logical consistency on Biblical zeal, and for technical elaboration on Platonic metaphysics. The three factors give to his psychological speculations true didactic qualities, and are visible in the inward character of what may be reconstructed as his definition of the human mind. Attending to each of the three factors, this definition would probably take on the following terms:

the human mind is an incorporeal and self-known substance which governs the bodily and rational activities of men. Nor is it at all difficult to reconstruct Saint Augustine's definition of mind in his own words, although he never seems to have put it in conclusive form. It is necessary in such reconstruction to piece the definition out of several aspects of his writings. In his *De Quantitate De Anima*, for instance, he adopts a formula that includes most of the terms suggested above by saying that the mind is *substantia quaedam rationis participans, regendo corporis accomodata*. (*De Quant. An.*, XIII. xxii.) Here, however, there are two features left out: the incorporeality, and the self-knowledge of the mind. And both features are dwelt upon everywhere in his writings, and with particular emphasis in his *Trinity*. Moreover, all the terms of the definition, in its reconstructed shape, receive a dialectical support which is important to consider in the light of the meaning given by Saint Augustine to each term.

To begin with, what he meant by *substantia* is far removed from the subjective substance of post-Cartesian days. His theological preoccupation with the resurrection of the flesh, stood him at this point in the same good service as his Platonism. Its requisite necessity of conceiving a substantial mind that should have the fate of a substantial body, made his allegiance to the categories of matter and form,

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as applied to man, to shape itself into a position that comes at times very close to that of the best representatives of Greek metaphysics. This position, clearly stated by Saint Augustine in his definition of man as "a substance consisting of matter and form," prevented in him a permanent adherence to the Platonic myth of an accidental union of body and mind. It assisted him, moreover, in conceiving the human mind as the metaphysical form, or the ennobling half of the substance or species "man," of which the body was the remaining half. In this connection, in other words, the mind was to him a substance in a more Platonic sense, so to say, than it appears to be in Plato's occasional representation of it in mythical terms. It was Platonic *being*, and instead of suggesting any separation from the body, it is clearly harnessed to the body even in the mind's afterlife fate.

What he meant by *rationis participans* was that the mind "is capable and can be partaker of" the rational entities of which the world is conceived to be constituted, and of which "God is the highest." (*Trin.*, XIV. iv.) In consequence of this participation, the mind is not only capable of purely rational activities in connection with corporeal objects of knowledge, "wherein our actions, besides our knowledge, are concerned," but is also capable of being employed "in contemplating eternal things, wherein it is limited to knowing alone." (*Trin.*, XIII. i.) The

rationality in man, in other words, is part of the rationality of a world which is conceived, as in Platonic systems, to be a structure of reason. Man's reason merely localizes a fraction of the world reason, and preserves this fraction as man's own inherent possession, both when it corresponds to corporeal things which the mind reaches with the aid of the body, and when it flows from incorporeal things reached by the mind alone. Thus, "as the mind itself really seeks those things which are sought by the eyes or by any other sense of the body, . . . so, too, the mind finds out or invents other things . . . , not with the medium of the senses, but through itself, when it 'comes into' them: and this whether in the case of God . . . " or in other cases. (*Trin.*, X. ix.)

What he meant by *regendo corpore accomodata* lends itself to several interpretations. At times he appears to think along lines of a particular interaction between body and mind; and this in spite of the fact that at other times he states explicitly that to his estimation the problem of any interaction between them lies beyond human solution. (*De Civ. Dei*, XXI. x.) There seems to be no room for doubt that he knew the impossible issue of the problem. That is possibly the reason why he had to repudiate his earlier leanings to Plato's representation of an adventitious union of body and mind, a union which he had attempted to explain in early writings by postu-

lating an intermediate semi-corporeal element, which is very suggestive of the "spiritus animalis" advocated by subsequent writers. (*De Gen. ad Litt.*, VII. 15.) But in spite of this repudiation, he was never able in his maturer works to uphold consistently his metaphysical stand that the mind is the quickening half of one substance, man. In Saint Augustine there was always room either for materialism or for what was fantastic in Plato. And in connection with the relation of body and mind, what was fantastic was carried on to all the extent of whatever moral implications it contained. Thus Plato's charioteer became in Saint Augustine the human mind, and, without troubling himself about the two steeds, the chariot became to him the human body. A physiological apparatus, moreover, caused the mind, through the intervention of the brain, to act as the master of the body, governing the reins of human life. (*De Civ. Dei*, X. iv.)

What he meant by *incorporeal*, as applied to mind, was just what Plato had meant by it as applied to all *being*. When Saint Augustine says that only the habit of "associating to the mind qualities of material things," is the obstacle for "those who have any difficulty in conceiving an incorporeal mind," he not only uses the language employed for the same purpose in modern times by Descartes and Locke, but he also repeats the words employed by Plato and Plotinus for defending the incorporeal na-

ture of every reality. It is probable that it was the incorporeality of the Christian God that caused him to incline to the notion of an incorporeal nature for the mind; but this incorporeality of God, as we saw, was a notion made possible in his mind by Platonic thought. Nor do his arguments ever go beyond the stock contentions of Plato and Neoplatonism. They revolve around the fact that the mind deals, unaided by sensuous imagery, with such incorporeal things as truth, virtue, and the infinite. But the interesting feature of his indebtedness to Plato in this connection, is that not until he became acquainted with Platonic ontology was he able to think of any reality which should not have a counterpart in sensuous imagery, a personal trait of which he offers an unusual record in the tenth book of his *Confessions*.

What he meant, finally, by the mind's *self-knowledge*, is not, as sometimes assumed, what the self-certainty of consciousness has meant to modern writers. It was rather a matter connected with the self-apprehensible nature of man's moral superiority in the world. There is, in other words, a purely ethical motive to Saint Augustine's conception of the mind's self-knowledge. He claims at first that, since knowledge implies the presence of an object or of the species of an object in the mind, it is self-evident that the mind, which by nature is the knowing part of man, should know itself, since nothing

can be thought of as being more present in the mind than the mind itself. Anticipating, moreover, the obvious observation that the mind often goes astray and errs in its knowledge of itself, Saint Augustine argues that such cases of error are due, like the difficulties of some people in conceiving the immateriality of the mind, to a certain perverseness of man's will. It is owing to the wickedness of the will that the mind "is wont to be *in* corporeal things," and also that it should fall into "the shameful errors" of confusing its own species with that of other things. Another argument, based on the act of doubt, and specially liable, therefore, to be taken as contending for something like the modern notion of self-awareness, is that the mind "knows itself" as it knows that it doubts when it doubts, "not as if touched by any sense outside itself." As the act of doubt can be connected with every one of the mind's functions, or with the mind in its entirety, the mind knows itself in its entirety. (*Trin.*, X. x.) But in either argument Saint Augustine insists that the self-knowledge of the mind is a sort of ethical truism. "For how," he asks beforehand, "will the mind take pains to obey the very precept which is given it, 'know thyself,' if it knows neither what know means nor what thyself means?" (*Trin.*, IX. vi.) Both arguments, on the other hand, tend to substantiate the answer he gives to this question by saying that it "knows both, hence it knows itself."



At the same time, what is of moment to him in the entire notion of the mind's self-knowledge is, he says, "not the mind's knowing itself, but the mind's thinking of itself." He feels that the knowledge of itself is something that is taken care of by the very nature of the mind as "a knowing thing"; while the question of the mind's thinking of itself, or of its moral nature, is the unsolved question of human conduct. The mind is somehow enjoined, he says, "as an element of its very nature," to think of itself, "not in order to decide what is the mind in any man, but what it ought to be in the eternal plan." (*Trin.*, IX. vi.)

Such are the elements of thought, and such is probably the meaning, underlying the terms of Saint Augustine's conception of the human mind. This conception covers, as we can see, many a form of human experience: bodily, rational, and ethical. The last one is perhaps the side of human experience that he has represented more impressively. It is also of more practical value to him. His interest in the self-knowledge of the mind as a moral necessity involves a healthful departure from Neoplatonism. When he turns the Socratic dictum "know thyself" into a self-apprehensible moral principle in man, he brings no small relief for the break worked by the Medieval mind on the wedlock which the same precept effected in ancient Greece between morals and reason. Featured by this precept as an

inherent possession, the mind transcends in Saint Augustine the ontological meaning to which it became reduced with Neoplatonism, and lends itself to an interpretation in terms relative to morals. Sometimes, Saint Augustine forgets that historical break between reason and morals, and is unmindful of what he himself is doing towards patching it up. When he adopts, for instance, the division of mind into *vita seminalis*, *sensualis*, and *rationalis*, he simply makes morals dependent on reason. But this lapse is a contradiction that can hardly be explained in him. His actual division of the mind is that of sense, reason, and will. It is *will* that comes to occupy with him the moral grounds left vacant by a disreputed reason.

Here, better than at any other point, in Saint Augustine's necessity of postulating for the will a supreme function in the human mind, is where his supernaturalism, and the history of his private experience, converge and combine with his metaphysical heritage to determine his conception of mind. What sets the key to this combination and convergence, is the fact that sense, reason, and will, are to Saint Augustine not only three functions, but also three levels of superiority reached by the human mind. They are levels of growth, and they appear as the following three stages of personality; the "outer man," reduced by sense perception to an existence conditioned by corporeal things in man and in the world; the "inner man," determined by reason to

dealings with incorporeal things, such as mathematical truths; and the "contemplative man," conditioned by will for a "life which is referred to nothing else, but suffices in itself to him who loves it." (*Trin.*, XI. vi.) It is on the basis of this tripartite division of the mind, as well as on that of the paramount function given to the will, that Saint Augustine builds his endless series of trinities. In each trinity, as well as in each member of every trinity, the will is always present. A dialectical cabalism makes all the trinities revolve around sense, reason, and will, which, with their corresponding determination of "outer," "inner," and "contemplative" lives, are counterparts for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This irrelevant lore, strangely enough, furnishes the best clue to the biographical antecedents of Saint Augustine's reflections on the human mind. What is theological and narrow at first sight, comes out, if we care to understand it, to be interspersed with elements of a genuine empirical character: with his dazzling moral transparency, with his efforts of self-scrutiny, with that virtuosity in self-analysis that will always give him a right to upbraid "those who go forth to wonder at the heights of the mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the broad flow of the rivers, at the extent of the ocean, and at the course of the stars, and omit to wonder at themselves." (*Conf.*, X. x.) In other words, while his theological preoccupations may leave us in a mood

for not deciphering them, the story of their development in him is of supreme value to the chronicler of his psychological views. Thus to the course of his religious experiences can be easily retraced the importance given by him, under his irrelevant trinities, to sense, reason, and will, and to their concomitant divisions of men's whole personality into "outer," "inner," and "contemplative" forms of mental life. And to retrace these antecedents, all we need is merely to enumerate the significant stages in the history of Saint Augustine's conversion.

From the time of his philosophically colourless and otherwise unprepossessing youth, to the time when he found himself conquering the world for the Christian faith, Saint Augustine passed through three distinct phases of intellectual development. At first, he went through a period of philosophic boyhood, during which he was contented with the belief of having found a source of human happiness in the ultimate knowledge of things. An inveterate dislike for Greek literature combined with the personal trait of an unusually vivid sensuous imagery, to produce in him a certain immunity to immaterialism. In spite of being enthralled in Medieval superstitions, he could see no other source of knowledge than sense observation, no other counterpart of reality than sensuous images. This is the materialism that had made Saint Augustine a staunch Manicheist. An immaterial God, at this

period of his career, was beyond his reach. Still less could he conceive an immaterial mind. Mind, he writes, was to him "a subtle body diffused in local space . . ." and "whatsoever was not stretched over certain spaces, nor diffused, nor crowded together, . . . I judged to be altogether nothing." (*Confessions*, VII. i.)

A second period followed during which his wayward materialism became arrested at his awakening to Platonic thought. It is again probable that as long as he was not preoccupied with an immaterial deity, he was unable to conceive either an "inner self" or a supersensible sanction of truth; but it is obvious that as long as *esse* remained *percipi* for him, he was incapable of conceiving such a deity. We have already seen how Platonic writings impressed Saint Augustine to the point of having made him always fear that, had he fallen under their influence after feeding his mind in the Bible, they might have withdrawn him "from the solid grounds of piety." So sweeping indeed was their hold upon him, that the very imperceptibility which at one time was his stumbling block for apprehending the Christian God, was suddenly turned by them into the essential condition for that apprehension. At that moment when he could believe in God just because he was imperceptible, he began his endless charade between his unseen God and his "inner self." He had then discovered not only an invisible

God in Heaven, but also a new source of truth in himself. He says that he beheld God, "with the eye of my soul, above the eye of my soul, above my mind." (*Confessions*, VII. x.)

This second period of spiritual growth was not to be the last. In the very fever of his surrender to Christianity, Saint Augustine was to go through a third inward struggle. Not being a mere imbibor of truth, his discovery of God required in him something more than belief in his existence, or fear of his superabundant power. It required, above all, worship. And this meant purging the entire leaven of his life. His apprehension of God was to make his own life godly, a life enshrined in pious devotion to the works of God. The aftermath, in other words, of what he had found with the tools of reason, was to be achieved through the exercise of a disciplined will. The reflective coma he suffered under the shade of his episodic fig tree, was to be followed by his resolution to bring about, at any cost, even at the cost of carnal mutilation if necessary, a spotless and deliberate conformity with God. His actions, that is, were to find their ultimate desideratum, not in his own impulses, pious though they were, but in the special outward signs of God's will in the world. In his awareness of a dilemma between his own will and the will of God, he set indeed the goal of his moral redemption at the point, he says, "where I willed not to do what I willed,

and willed to do what God willed." (*Confessions*, IX. ix.)

This, then, is the order of Saint Augustine's gradual ascension to the upper regions of the Christian dogma. No wonder that his conception of mind, involving as it did every feature of that ascension, should have become the most enduring conception in the history of the Christian world. For it actually offered to every Christian a tested ladder to God.

But it cannot be an accident, we may confidently say, that the order of Saint Augustine's intellectual career, oscillating as it did between sensuous limitations and a revised reason, and finding finally a resting place in a disciplined will, should coincide with the order of his distinctions of mental life: sense, reason, and will, and their corresponding determinations of an "outer," an "inner," and a "contemplative" aspect of experience. We have seen how Saint Augustine, true in a great measure to his metaphysical background, defines each of these distinctions. By sense or "outer man," he means an experience circumscribed by contacts with corporeal things; he means by reason or the "inner man," an immersion in incorporeal truth; and by will or the "contemplative self," a conformity with divine existence and decrees. It is obvious therefore that, attending to his own analysis, the three stages of his career not only seem to have been the index

for his tripartite divisions of the mind, but they also represent the best illustrations for the exact meaning given by him to the three divisions. To the first stage of his life corresponds the "outer man"; to the second, the "inner man"; and the third, the "contemplative man."

It may be argued that the correspondence here suggested between his life and his treatment of mind, while apparently true in connection with the second and third stages of his career, seems to break down in connection with the first or the materialistic stage. The correspondence does seem to be exact in the second and third stages. In the case of the meaning and the supremacy given to the will over all the functions of the mind, Saint Augustine could not offer a better illustration than that of his own feeling of enraptured conformity with a divine will. The status he gives to the will simply renders in a large scale the deciding fiat he found for all his uncertainties in a disciplined subjection to God. In the meaning he gives to reason, the case is almost as plain. The meaning of reason as an immersion of the mind in a Neoplatonic scheme of rational entities, finds indeed an interesting correspondence with the second stage of Saint Augustine's career. He then becomes actually absorbed with the incorporealities of Platonic metaphysics and of the Christian God. When at this juncture of his career he began to busy himself with incorporeal



things, the human mind lost for him, as we saw, all its former corporeality. But did the materialism of his earlier years have a similar function in his mature reflections?

There can be little doubt about it. Though it would seem logical to suppose the contrary, the materialism of his earlier years was never outgrown by the more mature turns of his mind. In fact, his initial belief that the mind is "a subtle body diffused in local space," was highly influential on his subsequent beliefs, and actually furnished him with the materials for his discussion of the "outer man," the most elaborate and perhaps the most consistent discussion in his psychological writings. The same belief was also at the root of all his difficulties in trying to describe the human mind as incorporeal or unextended. Similar difficulties were experienced by every future writer who followed on the track of Saint Augustine. In each of these attempts in history it needs no shrewd scrutiny to see that, in spite of discursive efforts in the opposite direction, the mind turns out to be neither so unextended as not to be present in every fibre of the body, and in every cranny of the world outside; nor so incorporeal as not to be in most homely contact with all the morphological features of life. This is an inconsistency which in Saint Augustine is simply grotesque. McDougal points it out well. After observing that "Saint Augustine taught that the soul is present at

every moment in every part of the body," the British psychologist makes this fitting remark, "And yet, the soul was not to be regarded as having extension."

Saint Augustine, moreover, seems to have believed that he had succeeded in blending with his borrowed metaphysics that spontaneous materialism of his unruly youth. Thus, under an immaterialistic spell he was able to speak of the very incorporeality of mathematical truths, as "having something of our own nature subjoined to them," for otherwise, he felt, "we would not be able to judge even of corporeal things." In the same manner, his materialism remained in him coarse enough as to enable him to believe that "the grossness of our flesh," and no other thing, was the reason why our skin does not change colours, like that of the chameleon, "according to the colour perceived." (*Trin.*, X. ii.)

These philosophic incongruities, which reflect themselves in Saint Augustine's quasi-physical conception of mind, point to the limitations of his personality as a philosopher. Philosophy seems to have been the feeblest side of his mind. It was an incidental acquisition, not a pursuit, as rhetorics first, and theology afterwards, had been in his life. Even as going to School to Plato, we cannot help thinking of too many handicaps, if not blemishes, in his person. He seems to be overtaken by Platonic myths

much more easily than by Platonic truths, as might a child, left with the serious volumes of his father's library, have eyes for their illustrations only. The comparison is perhaps too violent, but Saint Augustine is too tearful, he shows too much timidity in life, and too little disinterestedness in thought, to suggest a true student of Plato, a worthy school-mate of Aristotle.

But for the very reason of his philosophic limitations, philosophy is not to offer the standpoint from which Saint Augustine's conception of mind should be estimated. His was a task of leaving a new moral resource in the world, not a new doctrine in philosophy. And he fulfilled his task genially, because he evoked within his own breast a spiritual world for the rising Christian soul, and not because he "indicated for the first time," as one historian believes, "the possibility of psychology as a purely independent science." The world he evoked was to give vent, not to philosophic sanity, but to the hopes and the trembling fears and the mad monotony of religious impulse. To accomplish this task he could not have appealed to philosophic wisdom, which at his time had none of the significance given to it in Greek life. He had to avail himself of elements drawn from his own tragic experience in life, and from the ruins of civilizations gone to waste. But in spite of their sardonic conflict in history and in philosophy, those ruins and precarious elements

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were rendered capable, in Saint Augustine's hands, to spread a glamour of enduring spirituality over the history of Christendom, over the strange inception and miraculous growth of the Christian soul.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RATIONAL KNOWER

"*Eudoxus*: . . . Tell me, then, what you really are inasmuch as you doubt. It is on this point alone, the only one you can know with certainty, that I wanted to question you.

"*Polyander*: I now see my error. I see now that what I am, inasmuch as I doubt, is in nowise what I call body. . . ." (Descartes, *The Search After Truth*.)

" . . . Names have been given to things for the most part by the inexpert, and for this reason they do not always fit the things with sufficient accuracy; . . . It is not our business to change them after being accepted by custom, but only to correct their meanings when we perceive that others do not understand them aright. Thus because probably men in the earliest times did not distinguish in us that principle owing to which we think from the one in virtue of which we are nourished, grow, and perform all those operations which are common to us with the brutes, they have called both principles by the single name *soul*; then, perceiving the distinction between the two, they called the one by which we think *mind*, and believed also that it was the chief part of the soul. But I, seeing that the principle by which we are nourished is wholly distinct from that by which we think, have declared that the name *soul* when used for both is equivocal; and I further affirm that, when soul is taken to mean *the primary actuality*

of *man*, it must be understood to apply only to the principle by which we think, and I have called it *mind* as often as possible in order to avoid ambiguity; for I consider the mind not as a part of the soul, but as the whole of that soul that thinks." (Descartes, Sect. 4 of Reply to Gassendi's Objections Against *Meditations*.)

EVERY STUDENT of philosophy knows what Descartes taught the world regarding the human mind. The lesson has been remodelled by philosophers, adapted by theologians, and assimilated within the loose opinions of every casual reader, but it has never been unlearned. So influential is it as yet on our convictions concerning mental phenomena that we are not seldom tempted to turn towards Descartes as the one who either made us think of the human mind at all, or threw us into the most fabulous deception regarding it. A fact not so familiar, though of more value to the historian than the influence which, to the good or ill fortune of subsequent thought, Descartes has exerted over the last two hundred years, is that his conception of mind gives the best cue in history to the wisdom and the true temper of the Renaissance. It gives the intellectual outlook of the Renaissance a true history. It voices manfully the difficult reassertion of science in a world grown insensible to the warmth of individual initiative and it is also consonant, in an open rummage of moral motives, with the contemporary half-thoughts of men who somehow re-

mained loyal in religion to a decadent state of affairs against which they rebelled in science. An unsympathetic student might urge that the two issues are incompatible with each other, but in the mind of Descartes they certainly blend in congenial union, and reflect as in an angular speculum the two sides of the divided allegiance to which the Renaissance had pledged its real spirit. So that out of what in our own days may seem an illegitimate mangle, the conception of mind formulated by Descartes came to the relief of scientific and religious preoccupations by the ingenious and noiseless expedient of merging them into one single philosophic vision. The significance of this double ministration may be indicated by saying that it lighted religion a step ahead while in the transition from a supernatural to a philosophic perspective, and at the same time it supplied the first disclosures of modern science with enduring categories of logical validity and metaphysical scope. It is not to be wondered, accordingly, that Descartes wrote on the human mind with vehemence and unshakable spirit. He was simply conscious of his timely historical mission. The whole contemporary school was to find in his utterances a ready road out of a veritable plight, a plight which appears pitiable when we observe, as we propose to do briefly here, the confusion and perplexity experienced in the presence of psychological facts by the pioneers of modern thought.

In the beginning, mental phenomena had lost in modern science all their meaning and status. Once Galileo had studied the forces of this planet in the manner in which Kepler was studying those of the whole planetary system, and had thus laid the foundations for interpreting nature mathematically, not morally as of old, science had to settle down to the conviction that its subject matter corresponded to an order of phenomena structurally homogeneous and mechanically uniform, to which the impersonal use of mathematical demonstration alone, — not men's minds, or men's hopes and sights and thoughts, — could give coherence and meaning. Nature, as Galileo himself put it, disclosed the features of "a book written in mathematical terms, so that without mathematics as its code nothing could ever become intelligible in it." Mathematics, in other words, had assumed in knowledge the function and dignity formerly given to the human mind. The entelechy of man, the synthesis of man's relationships with the natural and social elements which condition human existence, now had as little to do with knowledge as the entelechies of all the king's horses.

But it occurred to no one to probe this sudden change to the bottom. A prescriptive moral impulse rushed in before long to force upon the forerunners of modern science the very psychology which they had outgrown, making their extraordinary minds the sport of the most childish presumptions re-



garding mental facts. To illustrate this situation the following passage from Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* is worth quoting: "Although I am of the opinion that the knowledge of the Mind may be more really and soundly inquired, even in nature, than it hath been; yet I hold that in the end it must be bounded by religion, or else it will be subject to deceit and delusion; for as the substance of the soul in the creation was not extracted out of the mass of heaven and earth by the benediction of a *producat*, but was immediately inspired by God; so it is not possible that it should be (otherwise than by accident) subject to *the laws of heaven and earth*, which are *the subject of philosophy*; and therefore the true knowledge of the nature and state of the soul must come by the same inspiration that gave the substance. Unto this part of knowledge touching the soul there be two appendices which, as they have been handled, have rather vapoured forth fables than kindled truth: Divination and Fascination." (*Works*, Robertson Ed. p. 108.)

Such was the hollow psychological structure which remained hanging like a useless scaffold on the finished minds of the Renaissance. Condemned to extinction by the new instrumentalities of scientific inquiry, the whole miscellany of past psychological notions, which belonged at its best to the qualitative universe of ancient metaphysics, was preserved in the atmosphere of religion, and clung freely to the

builders of the quantitative universe of modern science. It was not possible, however, for those inherited notions to conserve fully their old meaning. Having been originally formulated to support ingenious substitutes for unavailable sciences, they were to suffer inevitable changes when these sciences were no longer unavailable. It is also true that those knowing minds of the Renaissance, while not ready in their cherished religious attachments to drop ancestral myths regarding mental phenomena, were able in their intellectual honesty to think of those myths in a manner that made them, to some extent at least, harmless to science. Yet the ensuing transformation was not even as decisive as it could have been under the circumstances, its consummation having been checked, at times unnecessarily, in a manner easy to relate.

According to the ancient psychology which called for revision, mental phenomena formed a series of facts which, graded from sense to reason, corresponded or belonged to a series of universal forms of existence ordered in hierarchical fashion from matter to God. The uselessness of the psychological series was not to be felt in the experiences of men while a Bacon could speak of the "Mind" with a capital, as having been "immediately inspired by God," or while a Kepler could behold the Holy Ghost in the harmonious ratio of interstellar magnitudes; for many of the existences to which a large

part of the psychological series corresponded or belonged, remained undisturbed in the condition in which Scholasticism had left them. But in spite of the experiences of men, its uselessness was to be keenly felt in scientific spheres of thought no sooner than the same Bacon could speak of heaven without a capital, and the same Kepler was able to approach the problem of colours as the question of a mathematical distribution of rays and lines, not as the sense apprehension of qualitatively given species of colours; for as the one no longer had to deal with heaven as an extrawordly thing agreed upon beforehand by "reason," so the other no longer dealt with colours as metaphysical existences which required, for their apprehension in knowledge or for their realization in nature, the intervention of "sense." Science, in other words, no longer recognized the hierarchy of existence to which those psychological facts could still be said to belong or correspond. And the scientist found himself not knowing what to do with those facts. Had he been consistent with his subject matter and general attitude in science, his judgment would have come to a halt here. He would have left the mystery of the status and true location of mental facts to the future, or simply, as Leonardo did, "to the monks and their subtle versatilities." But that was not to be. The atmosphere was charged in the moral world with inconsistent compromise, and the scientist placed himself in the

ambiguous position of maintaining for psychological facts in morals a meaning which he renounced in connection with the subject matter of scientific knowledge. It was an amphibious sort of frame of mind. Bacon distinctly insinuates it in his readiness to place the human mind beyond the "laws of heaven and earth," and consider it alien to "the subject matter of philosophy." And what appears fanciful in Bacon is exactly what becomes technically settled in Galileo under circumstances which were bound up with the fortunes of modern thought.

With Galileo the subject matter of science becomes totally freed from "sense" and "reason," from the psychological series or metaphysical soul of the ancients. From "reason" it had already grown free in the measure in which the rising physical sciences developed without any dependence on conceptual objects formerly furnished by "reason." It remained for Galileo to complete this emancipation by proclaiming that the "accidents, affections, and qualities," which the senses spread over the quantitative data of science, belong to the "sensitive body," or, as his successors preferred to insist, to the knowing subject, not to the objects to be known. "I am inclined to believe," were his words, the most rehearsed words in modern philosophy, "that the tastes, smells, colours, etc., with regard to the objects in which they appear to reside, are noth-

ing but names, and exist only in the sensitive body. . . . I do not believe that there exists anything in external bodies for exciting tastes, smells, and sounds, but size, quantity, and motion, swift and slow; and if ears, tongues, noses, were removed, I am of the opinion that shape and quantity and motion would remain, but there would be an end to smells, tastes, and sounds, which, when abstracted from the living creature, I take to be mere words." (*Il Saggiatore*, quoted by Fahie's *Galileo*, p. 189.)

We have learned to look upon this wholesale elimination of "subjective phenomena" from the subject matter of science as an impulse to erratic speculations on what is "the other half of the real," as Professor Bergson's phrase goes, or on what is or would be the world without *us*. Very different, however, were its initial motives and immediate consequences. Among men deceived in their experience and faith by objects open to sense perception and enforced as objects of reason, it was natural to attribute to the individual, identified as he was no less with his sensitive body than with his reason, whatever was exuded as irrelevant to scientific inquiry by the quantitative subject matter of science. It was a timely and well motivated procedure which may have remained unquestioned had it not been for a very serious pitfall that it opened up for science itself. Depending, as science did at the

time, on the assertion of the individual's freedom and initiative over against overwhelming forces of corporate truth, was it possible, for instance, to deny a status in matters of truth to the same individual whom science had pronounced hopelessly incompetent in matters of sounds and colours and tastes? To say so would have been suicidal to science. So the scientist preferred to run into a flagrant contradiction rather than give up the logic of his position. He simply pleaded for the individual's sense and reason an untrammelled exercise in knowledge, after having characterized them as perverters of objects of knowledge. The contradiction is written on every page of the literature of the Renaissance, and it is strikingly exemplified in Galileo. Thus, while he could state that "so long as the understanding has experience to inform it, reason is not indispensable," (*Fahie, Ib.* p. 412) and while he could permit himself to ridicule those who opposed his discoveries on the ground that the objects discovered "could not be seen," (*Ib. Ib.* 255), yet he never ceased recurring, when hard pressed, to such arguments as the following from a letter to Castelli: "That the same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and understanding, does not permit us to use them, and desires to acquaint us in another way with such knowledge as we are in a position to acquire for ourselves by means of those faculties, — that, it seems to me, I am not bound to believe. . . ." (*Ib. Ib.*)

These inconsistencies can be easily explained. The pioneers of modern science had worked out a salutary logic of the seeing-is-believing type, which substituted personal experience for tradition as a source of knowledge, and impersonal inquiry for authority as a sanction of truth. But in giving validity to their findings, this logic remained relative to what they said or felt to be their own minds, which were the minds of half-liberated individuals whose sense and reason were not altogether divorced from authority and tradition. The only way out of this anomalous situation would have been opened to the modern scientist by calculating the grounds for truth both in religion and in science on the basis of his own position in science. But for this he was not prepared morally. Unlike his forerunners of ancient Greece, who were conscious intruders in a world they openly upbraided, he was the friend and hireling of princes and cardinals. Save exceptions mentionable on solemn occasions, he was wrapped up in the political and religious senility of the age, just like many of his incomparable contemporaries in art. In spheres of high scholarship he could trample on every icon in his way, but in religion he could insist, as Bacon did, that the legitimacy of faith increases in proportion to the absurdity of the divine mysteries believed. And Galileo, while he easily became the solicited teacher of all Europe, had no difficulty in agreeing to wear the tonsure or in kneeling once in a while to kiss the Pope's toe.

What is regrettable in this situation is not that men of science did not renounce their religion before their religion summoned them to recant their science; for their faith may have been a personal trait as blameless as their wisdom, and their troubles with religion may be traced to the stupidity of particular Church authorities. From a philosophic point of view, what is condemnable in a Galileo is that he never made the least attempt at arching over his wonderful ruthlessness in science with his acquiescence in religion; for this lack of reflective attitude towards his interests in life, especially after having "spent more years in philosophy than months in mathematics," betrays either intellectual dishonesty or moral sluggishness. Not that such an attitude would have yielded the particular logic and metaphysics which his divided allegiance demanded. We shall see in Descartes that the task required powerful speculative elements which the French philosopher had to supply. But any frank and deliberate attitude on the part of Galileo towards both science and religion would have been of far-reaching consequence. It would have woven into the texture of human life the fresh sense of truth that came upon the world with the apparition of modern science; and, without suppressing moral truths by a neglect easily mistaken for animadversion, such an attitude would have meant a great step in ridding the logical situation of science from the



difficulties of an obsolete representation of the human mind.

And that seems to be exactly the attitude that is consciously voiced by Descartes in his conception of mind. To his philosophic and mathematical genius he joins personal characteristics that were extremely favourable for this task. Within the domain of scientific inquiry he looms up like a spectacle of intellectual fervour, supplying the cruel anaesthetics under which a petrified Scholasticism is to be carved out like a tumor from contemporary minds. Outside of science, on the other hand, Descartes never outgrows his Catholic boyhood. He feels the need of pilgrimaging to the Virgin of Loretto, "on foot from Venice or in the most devout manner possible." The bold scepticism of his *Meditations* is so intertwined with his initial piety that he can dedicate them without a qualm to "the Sage and Illustrious Dean and Doctors of the Faculty of Theology of Paris . . . who have always proved to be the strongest support to the Catholic Church." Nowhere, except in the living spirit of the Renaissance itself, can human allegiance be found so evenly divided. Descartes simply felt in his own person the din of that spirit, and had the breadth of thought to give it philosophic expression in what he offered to the world as a new interpretation of the human mind.

We have seen that as modern science advanced, traditional views of mind grew meaningless and with-

out applicability, and also how the failure to give them an adequate reinterpretation made difficult the representations of the individual's new status in knowledge. We can now see in Descartes that the situation would have found some relief, even without discarding the belief in "a specially inspired" mind, if some attempt had been made at merely adding one more interpretation of mind to the many traditional ones which began to be considered as "having rather vapoured forth fables than kindled truth." Had the question as to what the mind is been approached from the very standpoint of what the God-given mind had become in science, the pioneers of science would have found a way out of most of their difficulties. That this is the standpoint, on the other hand, from which Descartes approached his task of giving the human mind a definition never known before, seems to be obvious. His question as to what the mind is, is not put in the light of what the individual is when he talks or sees or hopes. As *Eudoxus* asks *Polyander* in the unfinished dialogue quoted above, Descartes asks what the mind is in so far that the individual thinks or has certainties and doubts. And whatever Descartes says about the mind is inspired and justified by this function of the individual, this ability of being certain or doubtful, this capacity of dealing with truth.

It may be said, therefore, that this conception of mind has a logical rather than a psychological

scope. It represents a contribution to the birth of modern thought, not to a given branch of modern inquiry. It is the result of an analysis of what the modern individual is, rather than of what "man" is. It is occupied with the individual as a scientific knower, engaged in defining beliefs by the use of other sanctions than authority and tradition. It is not concerned with the "subject" of psychological research. There can be nothing more harmful to the understanding of the fact of psychological inquiry than the association of the Cartesian conception of mind with what historians insist in calling "the beginning of modern psychology." When taken in this connection, as having "drawn the boundaries of psychological inquiry," there is nothing "modern" about it; for it may be easily identified with a development of the psychological notions current in the metaphysics and theology of Scholasticism. From this standpoint the very language of Descartes has a distinct religious and Scholastic tone, and he can be quoted at great length to the effect that he has written about the human mind, as about God, in response to the appeal made by the Lateran Council to Christian philosophers, urging them to confound infidels on these questions. Not only can he be seen to follow his ancient predecessors in asserting that the human mind is "specially created," is "free and immortal," and is "what constitutes us human beings and distinguishes us from the brutes," but

also in holding such views as that "the mind is to be found complete in each individual," on the ground that the "question of more or less" applies, not to the mind, "but to the realm of *accidents*," not affecting "the *forms* or natures of the *individuals* in the same species." Taken, however, as a venture in logic, the Cartesian conception administers the mythical soul which that Scholastic language suggests, the exact cleansing and cropping prescribed for it by the rational exigencies of the Renaissance. From this standpoint, there is in his interpretation of mind nothing tentative or lukewarm, nothing intended to further vested interests or rehearse psychological traditions. On the contrary, quickened with the passionate obstinacy of a genuine discovery, there is a certain wholeness and finality about it, as of an outspoken dogma. It was formulated to all appearances as the philosophic creed of its own great age. We can now clearly perceive in it all forms of corporate impositions yielding to individual initiative, all sensuous limitations checkmated by mathematical proof, and all former sources and sanctions of truth rendered unnecessary by the portrayal of a free knower whose discipline enables him to institute his own mind as the origin and the sponsor of forever new relationships with the world. Descartes wrote on the human mind with a one-sided interest in this sort of knower. This knower is an individual self-sufficient in matters

of knowledge, an individual within whom an infinite fountain of truth is unlocked to sweep clean his intellectual activities from every possible danger of contamination with error, and whose bonds of union with past and present institutions and beliefs, whether they be foolish or not, are bonds of to-day, established on his own initiative and on his own responsibility, not on blind subserviences or conventions, nor on the inordinate impulses of life.

We have in all this a single-minded devotion of Descartes to the aspects worn by the human mind when the individual takes the rôle of an unaided voucher for truth. It is a devotion to be read literally into his writings. It is perhaps the best key to them. For it is only when the individual takes the rôle of sponsorship for truth that Descartes conceives the possibility of true knowledge. True knowledge, as Descartes conceived it, calls for the task of linking all conceivable objects of knowledge into one single chain, which depends, as much for its existential sustenance as for its logical validity, on the individual's power to assent to the simplest conceivable truth: to the truth that the individual himself exists in the world. This task was deliberately undertaken by Descartes himself when he drew the basis for his logic and for his metaphysics from the proposition *I think; therefore, I am*. The proposition involved for Descartes a truth and an existence. The truth, on the one hand, was his rec-

ognized model for all truths, and was the inspiring thought of the logic on which he insists in his *Principles*; "not that of the Schools," but the logic which he defines as "teaching us how best to direct our reason in order to discover the truths of which we are ignorant." As he repeatedly declares in books of his which bear as their names the substance of this definition, his logic consists simply in the resolution not to accept as true anything about which one does not have as much certainty as about one's own existence. On the other hand, the existence involved within the leading proposition of Descartes is for him the whole stamping ground for the existence of every object of knowledge in physics and in metaphysics. "Thus in considering that he who would doubt all things could not doubt that he exists while he doubts, and that what reasons so in being unable to doubt of itself even while doubting all else, is not what we call our body but what we call our soul or our thought, I have taken the being or existence of this thought as the first principle from which I have clearly deduced the following: viz. that there is a God who is the author of all that is in the world, or who being the source of all truth, has not created in us an understanding liable to be deceived in the judgments that it forms on matters of which it has a very distinct and clear grasp. These matters comprise the whole of the principles I make use of respecting immaterial or meta-

physical things, from which I clearly deduce those of corporeal or physical things, to wit, that there are bodies extended in length, breadth, and depth, which have diverse figures and move in diverse ways." (*Princ. Pref.*)

The most interesting part of this scheme for a universal science is that the fact on which it is set up, the individual's ability to pronounce himself certain or doubtful regarding such simple or evident facts as that of his own existence in the world, is nothing but the human mind to Descartes. Being the beginning and the end of all existence and truth, like the God of Aristotle, the human mind becomes representable for Descartes as a principle of principles in knowledge, and also as the logical antecedent of all the intelligibility of the universe. At first this lends itself to the subtle transposition of the human mind from a logical proposition into a metaphysical setting. In this setting the mind changes the character of the subject of a logical proposition, and is given the dignity of a substance or "thing." But the logical value ascribed from the start to the subject or pronoun *I* of the proposition, *I think, therefore, I am*, is the substantial marrow of all the meaning given by Descartes to the human mind, and is what makes unimpeachable the metaphysical reality with which it appears identified after being transposed from its propositional locus. How evident is that aboriginal logical value ascribed to

the mind, the familiar features of the Cartesian position in philosophy should convince us.

Thus the dramatic quarrel of Descartes with his own senses was a challenge to the world pressing it to deliver one fact, one single thing which, on proving itself able to sustain its veracity or existential ineradicability against the act of doubt with which it would be brought into question, he would enthrone as a principle capable of bearing the brunt of all human knowledge. Well known is the result of the quarrel. By swinging his doubt in all directions against all comers from the universal order of existence, he discovers that it is precisely his own doubt, his own ability of being certain or doubtful, that his challenge has yielded him as the fact he was after, as the single fact to be raised to the unrestricted function of a principle of principles, in the fashion of the hypothetical fulcrum of Archimedes. But it is evident that before rising to the possession of that supreme principle of knowledge, the undoubted doubter, the individual capable of being certain and doubtful, has received verbal embodiment in the proposition, *I think; therefore, I am*. It is no less evident, moreover, that the undoubted doubter, so embodied, or the underlying subject of the proposition, or the pronoun *I*, is the human mind to Descartes.

There is nothing strange about the fact that no matter what function or character the mind



receives in Descartes, it is never dislodged as the substance of an axiomatic proposition. If after proving, for instance, that *I* am something, and not nothing, for the reason that I think or doubt, I should further ask what makes me be something, or what kind of a thing is the pronoun *I* in the discourse in which I thus proved my existence, I would be asking what kind of a thing is a thing that thinks or doubts, and I could not expect to get any other answer than the one Descartes gives: a thinking thing, call it reason, understanding, thought, soul, or mind. But I need not stop here. I may proceed, as Descartes did, to build up a metaphysics around the fact that there are things of two kinds around me; some that I have defined as thinking things, and others that do not think. I may call the former "minds," and the latter "bodies." I may qualify the former as having the attribute which I defined in them, thought, and the latter as being distinguished by a quality like extension. Beneath this metaphysical structure in the process of erection, some of the experiences and fancies of my own may reappear, vitiating and in the end intercepting to a great extent my view of the world which I am reinterpreting. So that after having reached my speculative goal I may even see that the very doubt with which I had challenged the meanings and the existences and the conventions of an unstudied world and an unrevised life, is not as real or legiti-

mate as some of the things it brought into question. In short, the resulting system of metaphysics in which I had placed the human mind at the bottom of all existences and truths, may turn out to be a false or fictitious system. But it would seem that in spite of all the imaginable shortcomings of the system, so long as the latter rests on the proposition, *I think; therefore, I am*, nothing could ever affect the meaning given in this proposition to the human mind. To do so, one would have to work some change on the nature of the proposition itself. And this is impossible. It is at least no more possible than to alter the axiomatic nature of the proposition, "what is, is." In fact, at the least tilt in the unaccountable orbit of each term in the fundamental Cartesian proposition, all human intelligibility in the world, and not only any particular structure of knowledge that should happen to be reared on it, would crumble to the ground.

In other words, even if we suppose the need of rejecting every truth which Descartes based on his conception of mind, we could still see in this conception an unshakable philosophic significance; we could still conceive it as the logical foundation for truths other than his own. It was indeed as the basis for certainty in man and for intelligibility in things, that Descartes wished to hand it down to posterity. It was to him a foundation for unknown truths. None of the truths which he found ca-

pable of being sustained by it had any influence on its formulation. When he set himself to define his view of mind, he had no ax to grind. He was preoccupied, if we may say so, with truth as such, not with this truth or that. In spite of his religious piety and his mathematical genius, he was after a pattern of truth other than any one that religion or mathematics could supply. He searched for it in the individual himself, and when he found it, as he did in the individual's ability to tell whether or not he lives his existence in the world, he raised it to the function of a pattern for religious and mathematical truths themselves. And in the performance of that function, Descartes' view of mind may never be obsolete. It may always remain a fact pertinent, if not inherent or "innate," as he believed, to the lives and convictions of men.

From a strictly historical standpoint it seems to be indispensable to make this separation of the function that the Cartesian view of mind had in the Cartesian system, from the function that Descartes intended to give it in all knowledge. And when we make the separation we cannot help wondering at the historical feat involved. There is something of a philosophic mirage in its implications. It involved the adoption of the human mind, rendered beforehand in terms of the individual's self-sufficiency in sanctioning and creating truth, as the starting point from which the new world of science was

to lay the foundations for an unknown future. The modern world was to pin its faith on the individual as the old world had pinned it on a divine being. The individual, even in Descartes' system, was to furnish the ground for every truth, even for that of God's existence.

Such is the historical significance of what Descartes undertook to say about the human mind. His is a conception so simple and categorical that it falls within the compass of a motto. Yet it was as inestimable in its historical serviceableness, in its efficacy in bringing a positive relief and in doing justice to a baffled intellectual world, as it was profound in the ingenuity with which it proposed to satisfy the philosophic issues which it precipitated. The only issue that concerns us to study here is that of the mind's disembodiment, an issue inevitably precipitated by Descartes' definition of mind in terms of thought, or in terms of the ability to discriminate between truth and falsity, not in terms of the materials which condition human life in nature and in society.

To a discriminating student of Aristotle this idea of the mind's disembodiment may, with no small reason, appear as nothing but a delusion, a haunting of regions outside all the cardinal points of natural existence. But it is easy to see that it is not as far-fetched as that. The idea itself did not originate with Descartes. In him it simply found

philosophic formulation. Its origin is to be placed in the revolts of the age both in science and in religion. In religion, it even found theoretic justification in the writings of Saint Augustine. Protestant reformers, nurtured as they were in these writings, began to teach believers to find religious truth in their own "private souls," not in the externalized paraphernalia with which the old Church had "appealed to their senses." Contact with God was to be felt, as Saint Augustine felt it: through "the inner mind," not through "the corporeal mind." In science, too, feeling was ripe for a distinction between an inner and an outer mind, one dealing with truth, and the other associated with error. The very idea of a disembodied mind is well hinted in Bacon's conviction that the mind has nothing to do with "the laws of heaven and earth." Objects of inquiry in science, as we have seen, grew elusive to sense perception, like God's commissions in religion. And it is indeed of no small historical interest, although not without reason, that in spite of these developments in science the separation of mind and body did not receive theoretic formulation before Descartes. For if objects of knowledge were to be conceived as lying beyond the reach of the bodily senses, it followed that the mind of the knower was to be located at some respectable distance from his body; that is to say, from the materials which go to make his bodily senses.

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Descartes himself would not have been able to meet the requirements of an argument for the separation of mind and body, had it not been for his own discoveries in mathematics. As Platonic metaphysics had supplied Saint Augustine with the elements for transforming the mind into a spiritual bridge to God, so mathematical acumen supplied Descartes with elements for turning the mind into a vehicle of truth both in science and in religion. This influence exerted on Descartes by his own mathematical innovations should indeed be added to the influences pointed out by Professor Bergson: the irresistible attraction of Greek thought, and the natural tendency of the intellect to follow what he has called the cinematographical method. By applying to physics the substitution of algebraic formulas for the static figures of Euclidean geometry, Descartes was able to adopt the entire scheme of a quantitative world, and then turn it, without doing violence to its materialistic implications, into a renewed structure. Of this structure, mathematics was not merely a code, as Galileo thought, but a fundamental constituent. Pouring thus the entire economy of existence into something like a mathematical composition, partly solved as it was already by the natural sciences, Descartes could conceive objects of knowledge as quantitative formulas or laws, not as quantitative material objects. He could speak accordingly of objects of knowledge as Saint

Augustine spoke of God's "invisible things": as objects reached by thought, not as things offered to sense perception. The spirit of Greek thought is here as evident as Professor Bergson sees it; but its intrusion, it seems, could not have been possible without the aid of modern mathematics. Cartesian geometry made it appear no less comfortable in the physics of Galileo than it had been in the ethics of Socrates.

This great experiment with the first truths of modern science not only made plausible but actually gave an obvious strength to the argument of a disembodied mind. It supported in a conclusive manner the contention that thought is the human link, no less in science than in religion, between man and truth. It made everything except thought irrelevant to that link, and made it necessary, through a slight innovation in language, to consider everything outside of thought as body, not as mind. Thought alone, unaided by any other fact formerly called "mental," could be set up as the instrument for arriving at truth in the domains both of natural phenomena and of "God's invisible things." On this basis a system of knowledge, such as Descartes had dreamed of, could take upon itself the aim of fitting religious truths to the hard facts of nature and to the wholesome truths of science. In religion and in science the undertaking was to bear fruits of a common savour, making it possible for Cartesian

philosophy to be the common ground on which a lay materialistic tendency should support modern solutions of theological problems, while some theological thinkers should find it congenial to side with the boldest philosophic materialism. The supernumerary character of the metaphysics required by such a system of knowledge, is transparent enough. But being a system, and one which covered the fund of knowledge and perfunctory belief assented to by any one whom Descartes could conceive as being in his "wits," it exalted a perfectly rational attitude, an attitude convinced that "in order to inquire into truth it is necessary once in one's life to doubt of all things." (*Princ.*, I. 1.)

How firmly, moreover, Descartes was able to subdue what was perfunctory to what was true in his formula for the human mind, we can see by the unrestricted materialism to which he recurred in order to state what the human mind is not. Philosophers who affect to wonder at the manner in which Descartes carried into his supernumerary metaphysics the Palladium of religion, may avail themselves of ready analogies to insist on the efforts with which he was to leave the human mind as free and immortal as he found it in theology. The philosophic fraud here involved is to be seen without being pointed out, and it would help little to try to cover it with a better apologetic veil than that which Descartes was able to find for it. But to dwell on



it at any length is to insist on the most incidental side of Cartesian thought. It is to insist on the limitations of that immature physics, and of that safe or unrevised morality, in spite of which Descartes undertook to build up a universal science. And what is worse yet, especially in connection with his view of the human mind, it is to be blind to the fact that this view is the outcome of an interpretation of mind in terms of logic, not of science. In terms of science, Descartes interpreted what in his judgment it was no longer necessary to regard as mind.

Indeed, just as his prophetic insight into the logical exigencies of modern thought led Descartes to strip mind from body, so his creative work in every branch of scientific investigation furnished him with materials for the task of stripping bodies from mental attributes. These were two tasks of equal value. Galilean science was to find in the one the clear formulation of its logic, and in the other the final leavening of its subject matter. It is instructive to notice, on the other hand, that if in his statement as to what the mind is, Descartes appears as a formidable ally of religion, and not of science only, in his stand on his no less important question as to what the mind is not, he is the uncompromising follower of Democritus. He not only reduces sense qualities, as Galileo did, to bodily activities, and adds to them the function of conven-

tional guides in practical life, but he interprets the human body itself, in every one of its activities formerly considered "mental," in terms of material phenomena, and by reference to "the laws of mechanics which are the same for all nature." And if his position on the human body cannot be considered supplementary to his stand on the human mind, it is just as thorough. Besides *The World* and the *Tract on Man*, so suggestive of the traditions of Greek materialism, Descartes has a statement, a short passage in the fifth book of his *Discourse on Method*, that constitutes in itself a true link to the natural scientist of our own days. That statement confirms what Huxley, two centuries later, expressed by saying that had Darwin not formulated the law of evolution, the true worker in the natural sciences would have had to invent it. (*Disc. on Method*, Bk. V., third paragraph. The passage is carelessly rendered in two English translations.)

It may be said, then, that instead of an interpretation of mind in terms of science, Descartes offers in his view of mind an interpretation of truth in terms of a particular attitude of mind. This is an attitude of extreme and most convinced rationalism assumed by Descartes himself towards the difficulties under which the modern individual was to work out his birthright in the new intellectual world of the seventeenth century. When Descartes himself tried to put his view of mind in

terms of science, he rendered it in terms of whatever truths had for him the force of scientific knowledge. He was thus led to put much of the fat of its genuine logical consistency in the fire. To this aspect of his work belong such unreadable features of his writings as his attempts at localizing the mind in the body, his clinging to a mythical representation of the will as the source of error, and his fanciful parallelism of bodily and mental activities. And if these irrelevancies never overshadow the positive side of his logical insight, it is because the initial motive of his representation of mind determines a limpid background of rationality and methodological safeguard for the great historical issues which engrossed his thoughts.

It is true that as a result of this function of logic given to the mind by Descartes, there remained a mist of unintelligibility around all subsequent psychological generalizations. One result was the mind's claim to exclusive spheres of existence over against those of all other phenomena in the world: the unhealthy dualism of body and mind which in modern philosophy is as pervasive as was in ancient philosophy the dualism of matter and form. But in spite of future consequences, which can be traced to the Cartesian conception, but for which subsequent thinkers can be blamed, that dualism was highly salutary in its own time and place. Its exaltation of the individual over every

limitation and imposition in knowledge, gives it sufficient historical justification. For its underlying motive was no venture into some psychical chemistry. It was inspired directly in the necessity of identifying the human mind with the rational function of discriminating what is true from what is false—with thought in the eulogistic sense given to it by logic. And it satisfied that necessity in two directions. On the one hand, it instituted the individual as the sole source and sanction of truth, and on the other, it stripped from the human body what were previously regarded as mental attributes, and thus brought to a happy culmination the Galilean task of despiritualizing natural phenomena.

To Descartes, in fine, the mind is nothing but the individual's ability to assent to certain simple truths or "notions," as he calls them, or, what is the same thing to him, the individual's inability to resist assenting to them. These simple truths are so simple that, as in the case of the "what is, is" proposition, the individual cannot reject as false without doing violence to whatever is inherent or "innate" in his own make-up. If some one, for instance, could not accept as true that the ears he is listening with, or that the ground on which he stands, is not nothing, there would be no hope for his mind. Not even then, however, would Descartes give him up as hopeless. The individual in question may be a professed sceptic, and he will be put therefore to a

more legitimate test in which even the possibility of dreams and hallucinations would be discarded. He will be put by Descartes to the test of being able to answer the question as to whether he is alive or not. And Descartes would say that any one unable to answer this question is either not human or dead. Let him just answer it, Descartes says, and we will have before us a mind; and on the basis of his ability to answer it, we will enable him to cope with questions which will gradually grow in complexity till they will embrace "all the truths of which he is ignorant." Let him just show us, Descartes will insist, the power of having certainty at least regarding his doubts, and we will have before us an individual capable of being freed from bodily limitations and external vigilance; we will be in the presence of a mind capable of being proclaimed a consummate rational knower.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE to conclude a study of these three conceptions of mind by making some suggestions regarding their historical origin and their comparative value. Of their origin, in the first place, we may perhaps say what Dean Woodbridge says of the origin of every belief or institution in history. An origin, he states, points to action, not to continuity. It indicates, "not that the originators of the belief had ancestors, but that, in view of their contemporaneous circumstances, they acted in a certain way. To explain the origin of anything, therefore, we cannot trust to continuity of history alone. That continuity may carry us back to the beginnings of beliefs and institutions which have persisted and been transmitted from age to age; it may reveal to us experimental factors which have shaped beliefs and institutions, but which have long since been forgotten; but it can never, of itself, reveal the experimental origin of any belief or institution whatever. That is, in principle, the limitation by which the explanation of historical continuity is restricted. To understand origins, we

must appeal to the contemporaneous experience of their age, or to experimental science." (*The Purpose of History*, p. 69f.)

Here we have a methodological criterion for a task that becomes indispensable to the historian of psychology; the task, namely, of extricating what is native and what is alien to each historical contribution to the history and the application of the knowledge of mind. The criterion presents two equally important aspects, referring the one to the relevancy of contemporaneous experience, and the other to the danger of the concept of continuity. Both aspects are applicable to the study of our three thinkers and their conceptions of mind. Thus we have seen, on the one hand, that each conception is not merely a product, but a comprehensive expression, perhaps the most comprehensive expression, of the experience of its own age. It is root and flower of that experience. It was formulated to embody an interpretation given by its originator to the minds with which he found himself in contact, one of them having been his own mind. We have seen what that contact was. It was of such a high tension in each thinker that there was little outside of it to detain his generalizations. Proofs of this tension are the local colour of his definition of mind, and the fact that much of his age and a great deal of his definition are an index to each other in history. Just as his views now transport us into the midst of the social and in-

tellectual temper of his age, so the elements of life and learning that featured his age offer us a guide to the originating factors of his views.

On the other hand, we have seen that in trying to trace each conception back to its origin in history, the concept of continuity can be dispensed with as unnecessary and misleading. Had each thinker adopted the results obtained by his predecessors, or had he even seen in those results anything worth adopting, then we should have found a genuine continuity between their efforts. But we have seen that such was not the case. Neither Aristotle, nor Saint Augustine, nor Descartes, begins where his predecessors left off. On the contrary, each of them finds no merit whatever in former achievements, and invariably ends by qualifying them as arbitrary, when not as altogether meaningless. He is always the interpreter, we may repeat, of a contemporaneous mentality, not of an old body of doctrines about the human mind. He is conscious of coming with a message of his own about the minds of men, and his message crosses and overshadows everything formerly said regarding them. In a word, each of our three thinkers reflects in his views his own obvious motives; and the motives of each, far from bringing the three together so as to make their positions continuous with one another, set up for each position a barrier of isolation and discontinuity.

This detachment of the three writers from the



past and from one another, has already been dwelt upon to a considerable length in the above chapters. Suffice it here to point out that it is a deliberate detachment in every one of the three. It is made explicit by each. Thus Aristotle is so interested in stating his divergencies from former thinkers that he devotes to the matter the bulk of one of the three books of his *De Anima*. He examines there the different views of his predecessors, writes also the only extant account of many of their ideas, and says plainly that in so doing he intends to present his own psychological theories "as a new series of conclusions regarding the human mind." These conclusions, he does not hesitate to repeat, "have been arrived at by an analysis made all anew, and from the very first principles." And then, to express the same thing in the manner of a warning, he reiterates that the human mind, "in this treatise, must not be understood as it was among our predecessors." (*De An.* I. 1. 2.) In the same manner, Saint Augustine states his aloofness from every one of his forerunners as with the assurance of a true personal emancipation. (*Trin.*, X. 7.) And Descartes makes a most elaborate statement to the same effect. "There is nothing," he writes, "which better shows how defective are the sciences of the ancients than what they have written about the human mind and its passions, for although it is a subject the knowledge of which has always been

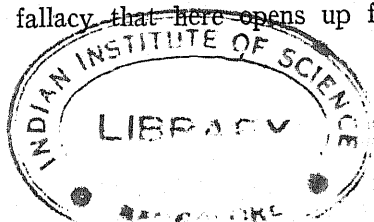
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much sought after, and which does not appear to be one of the most difficult, . . . nevertheless, what the ancients have taught upon the subject, is of slight import, and for the most part so untrustworthy, that I cannot hope to reach the truth, except by abandoning the path which they have followed. That is the reason why I shall be obliged to write now as if I were treating a subject which no one before me ever touched upon." (*Passions of the Soul*, I. 1.)

In the next place, what we have thus far said regarding the historical origin of the three conceptions, we may perhaps repeat in connection with their comparative worth. The appeal to contemporaneous experience, as an alternative to the concept of historical continuity, may also here be of no small consequence and value. It leads us to understand by the comparative value of each conception the measure of faithfulness with which it responded to the setting of its own local impulses and native motives. If, while agreed on this interpretation of historical value, we also agree that the three conceptions responded with equal faithfulness to these impulses and motives, we should be led inevitably to conclude that each conception is the best in its own time and place. Such, indeed, is the chief conclusion that in many a respect is to be drawn from the analysis we have made of our three thinkers. Each of the three is the best in his own native perspective, and none of them is

the best in the perspectives of the other two. Any other conclusion seems to involve the danger of entrapping the historian in the fallacy of thinking that the best conception is the one which best suits his personal point of view.

There is one respect, however, in which this conclusion does not offer the last word to the above chapters. Were the value of the three conceptions due to no other thing than to the interest they may arouse in the historian, then we should have to pronounce each as good as any of the other two for the reason that they would equally belong to a past that is already dead, and not for any other reason. Fortunately or not, however, they are not as yet a matter of historical record or curiosity only. They constitute in our days part of the fund from which most of us still draw our materials and vocabulary for forming our own notions regarding the question as to what the human mind is. Accordingly, there would be nothing strange if it were claimed that by their comparative value we should understand the proportion in which each of them is capable of satisfying our needs, or that the task of the historian should be one of extricating, not only what is native and what is alien to each of the three, but also what is food and what is poison in them to us. Nor need the historian recoil altogether from this task by declaring that he is writing history, not psychology. The obvious fallacy that here opens up for him



has been indicated already, but it is in one sense inevitable, for he cannot help having a point of view of his own; and in another sense he can make it harmless by merely stating what his point of view is.

There is, then, another way open to the historian of psychology for comparing his facts. It consists in giving the facts an order of preference, as the settled and legitimate effect of a personal background, though not without first satisfying the pathetic necessity of confessing the psychological currency which the historian himself is accepting, and in accordance with which his data falls into that order of preference. To illustrate the results of adopting this procedure we may contrast them with the consequences to which we are led by adopting the concept of continuity. That some authorities, consciously or not, have applied this concept for determining the value of the three historical efforts here in question, is a curious fact for which we have referred the reader of our foreword to another work. The result, it will be readily observed, is that to these authorities the later any of the three efforts falls in an order of chronological appearance the higher is it to be placed in an order of philosophic merit. But to say, as we have done already and trust to show now, that the truth about their philosophic merit seems to point exactly the other way, is simply to insinuate a point of view from which they appear to us in that particular way. It is, at

most, to profess to speak for those who in our own days are inclined to assume a naturalistic or (as it must be said) Aristotelian attitude towards mental phenomena.

With these provisions made, let us compare. In the light of what a naturalistic attitude makes us eager to learn from the past of psychological inquiry, we notice an evident retrogression, not a progressive growth, when skipping first from Aristotle to Saint Augustine, and then from Saint Augustine to Descartes. In that light, it is the first and more ancient, not the last and more recent, that in one sense is the most modern and, in all senses, is the best. Especially if in comparing them we conserve some of the sense that prevails in the best psychological efforts of our own days, we notice one special feature in Saint Augustine and in Descartes that gives both of them a low stature at the side of that of Aristotle. For neither of the two seems to show an interest in psychological inquiry in the sense in which that interest is understood today. What makes them think of the human mind at all, is their respective preoccupation with theology and with the logical exigencies of modern science, not the attraction of the human mind itself as an object of worthwhile inquiry. The result is almost the same in both cases. The human mind is defined in each case in the light of extraneous interests. Thus to Saint Augustine the problem reduces itself to this:

what is the human mind *if* Christian theology is to be given universality of application; and the answer, as we have just seen, renders the human mind into a background for Christian theology. To Descartes the problem is set in a different key, but the inspiring motive is similar. The problem to him is simply this: what is the human mind *if* the claims of the modern individual in matters of scientific truth are to be given logical validity; and the answer turned the human mind into a principle of logic. It may be said, therefore, that the value of these two historical definitions of mind lies exclusively in the consistency with which they satisfied the conditional problems which they came to settle, not in any light thrown by them on the human mind as the subject matter of a particular branch of investigation. The two thinkers may be found congenial to modern psychological efforts when they approach the human mind with the initial conviction that the mind is an imponderable object, but not when they appear with the resolute determination of giving the mind a meaning capable of holding the mirror up to the causes which they championed. For with that determination, Saint Augustine is just a theologian, and Descartes just a logician.

To Aristotle, on the other hand, the human mind is no circumstantial expedient. He does not have to make it so, for he does not move in a world in which religious dogmas are sustained with the scraps of

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philosophic tradition, or where scientific truth requires any shrewd safeguards against irrational habits and interests. The human mind, moreover, suggests to him no imponderabilities. If it is made by him to hold the mirror up to anything, it is to human life both in nature as nature appears in the physical sciences, and in society as society appears in the social sciences. Either from the standpoint of its ultimate metaphysical connotations, or from that of its observable manifestations in logical and ethical situations, the human mind is to Aristotle of one status of reality with any other phenomenon in nature, or with any other object of knowledge. It has no significance or meaning apart from biological activities, such as are present in the lives of other animals besides man, or apart from rational and moral achievements such as are present in the workings of good social institutions or in the growth of scientific knowledge. It is not something separate or different or apart from plants, animals, and human beings, given to them side by side with their bodies. It is simply an outcome of their activities, as are also such things as digestion and hearing, and it lends itself to knowledge and detailed analysis with no less ease and significance to life than those activities which go to make good and bad digestion or good and bad hearing. To Aristotle, in fine, the human mind is involved within the elements of a notional formula which is used

for marking off a particular form of life in a distinctive manner, and with a distinctive dignity. It indicates in the texture of the cosmos the factors which go to form life; and points out in the forces and possibilities of society the factors which contribute to make life human.

If we now go a step further in our comparison by dealing with the Augustinian and Cartesian conceptions as receding separations from the naturalistic or Aristotelian interpretation of mind, we shall find the sub-title of this essay justified. For the line that on this basis we may trace from Aristotle down to Descartes, marks the true process of the mind's gradual denaturalization in history. We may see, in other words, that after Aristotle the mind loses gradually the features of a natural phenomenon for those who try to define it. Let us, then, once more compare.

Aristotle's approach to the human mind has the detachment of an ocular inspection. We not only see him in the attitude of the consummate observer before a parcel of the natural world; we see the actual object under his observation. It is to him a fact among other facts in the world. He studies it in nature by standards supplied by nature herself, as might a Democritus study any chunk of matter. To Aristotle, in other words, the mind's relations with nature are no mystery; and its relations with any part of nature, such as the human



body, are of no other sort than the relations that exist for him between the phenomenon of vision and the objects in the world that are to be associated with the activities of seeing, or between the existence of a knife and the objects in the world that are to be connected with the activities of knifing or cutting. And here we have naturalism unspoiled.

Saint Augustine, six centuries after Aristotle, approaches the human mind in a strikingly different manner. It is, obviously enough, the Catholic manner of preternatural prerogative. He allows himself to spread over the human mind at large the history of his own mental economy. The human mind becomes with him a logical apparatus for the support of his faith. True to his Platonic indoctrination, however, no less than to that materialism of his youth with which he gave an osseous structure to Christianity, there is in Saint Augustine no absolute split between the mind and the body. Their union is of evident service to him. It strengthens his religious cause, and relieves his ignorance of nature. Yet, in spite of this service, his religious cause prevents in him a total estrangement of the mind from nature and from the body as the materials for conditioning the mind's meaning and existence. Nature and the body remain at one end of the mind's lot in the world. At the other end is Heaven. In this intermediary position of the human mind Saint Augustine offers a true representation of the biblical

version of man as a fallen angel. And here we have supernaturalism, which turns naturalism into anathema.

Then Descartes, twelve centuries after Saint Augustine, comes to the timely rescue of modern thought in its dire need of assertion against an inimical and opposing world, and he changes the language of the mind's definition once more. The mind becomes again a tool for truth. It is now made indeed the source and sanction of all truth, especially over against previously recognized sources and sanctions of truth, one of them having been the bodily senses. We have here in this function given to the human mind a representation of the mind of the Renaissance breaking all bonds with former intermediaries in matters of human knowledge. It pictures the modern individual divorcing himself from almost every object that threatens to overshadow the impersonal objects of scientific search. But we have seen how easy it is to detect in this individual the cherished habits of thought which bind him, in spite of an emancipation in his knowledge of the material world, to the supernatural world in which the Augustinian conception of mind was to be left untouched. His adequate representation required, accordingly, the loosening, not of his complete personality, but simply of the quasi-divine soul in which he still believed, from the world which he had begun to understand. This is the separation that the Car-

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tesian conception performed. By crediting every element of life to the quantitative world of physics, he was able to set the human mind free from nature and from the human body. The mind with him thus became lifeless in the same measure in which life became mindless. The mind acquired meaning and value in logic, not in life. And in this estrangement of the human mind from life, we have a rationalism that makes naturalism impossible.

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